

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF S.R. MACHAKA

by

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(i)

DECLARATION

I, MAGGIE MOLATELO TLADI, declare that 'A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF S R MACHAKA' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Machaka

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DEDICATION

- Dedicated to all my beloved grandchildren - Tšhegofatšo, Letšoba & Bohlale Selahle; Katlego and Malebo Tladi & Rearabilwe Mojapelo.

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Title of thesis:

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF S.R. MACHAKA

SUMMARY

A wide variety of aspects of Machaka's poetry was treated. His poetry which is meaningful when viewed against his traditional culture brings inspiration and a formal mode of literary expression.

Death was never accepted by the Tlokwa as an end to life. Machaka has succeeded in blending the ancestral worship with Christian faith. He has used euphemism to modify pain. He makes use of imagery to execute cruelty and bluntness of death.

Machaka's protest poetry echoes the same protest of those of other protesters. These refer to the injustice the Blacks experienced from the white regime prior to independence.

From his love poems, it is noticed that Machaka is a great lover. When he is in love, he becomes a slave.

Machaka uses traditional and modern praise poetry techniques. This made him manage to produce poetry which made a definite impact on Northern Sotho literature and contributed to its depth.

Key terms:

Modern and traditional poetic devices; Evaluation; Distinctive features; Imagery; Rhythm; Stanza; Form; Metre; Figurative Language; Functional Value.

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of Study

It is the aim of this study to evaluate the poetry of Samson R. Machaka so as to pave way for a deeper and better understanding as very little has been written on the contribution of this poet to Northern Sotho literature. The investigator will concentrate on his (Machaka) four poetical works namely:

- *Mehlodi ya Polelo* (Resonances of Language) 1971
- *Therešo* (Truth) 1965
- *Naledi* (Star) 1967
- *Seedi* (Light) 1979.

As we do not yet have any detailed analysis of his poetry, the present study therefore, is an attempt to assess this poet more fully in order to determine the quality of his works. It is noteworthy that his book *Mehlodi ya Polelo* (1971) won him the Samuel Edward Mqhayi Prize for literature in 1965. This prize was awarded by Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, for his first publicised book. His creative artistic talents and ability made a major contribution to Northern Sotho literature and the historic - cultural history of his nation, the Batlokwa.

1.2 Machaka's Biographical Sketch

(Samson) Rasebilu Machaka, also known as "Mfoka", was born at the Royal Kraal of Botlokwa. Among the people he lived with at Mankweng he was popularly known as Nkwe. He was born on the 31 May, 1929. The praise name Nkwe, is a specific totem for the Batlokwa.

Rasebilu is the fifth child of Masilo Malebogo and Makiditi Moyahabo. His three sisters are Ngwakwana, Moapatlodi and Motswapo; while his two brothers are Ntwamala and Makaepa. He is the paternal grandson of King Ntwamala Puledi Masenyane Machaka who ruled Botlokwa for nearly fifty years, and Mohlaremmipi Lephala Mabeba.

Machaka got his inspiration of writing from his illiterate grandmother, Nkgago Mantatane Machaka. The old lady had a tendency of gathering her grandchildren by the fireside in the evenings to recite for them praise poems, mainly of kings and heroic warriors. It can thus rightfully be said that the poetic devices such as praise name formulas, traditional symbols and rhythm found in Machaka's poetry, have their origin in his grandmother's traditional poetry.

Nkwe started his schooling late, in 1940 at Sekonye Mission Station; later known as Botlokwa Amalgamated School, now known as Botlokwa Higher Primary School. In 1943 June, he was among the pupils who were promoted from Std. II to Std. III, and at the end of that year, he passed his Std. III. This proves that Rasebilu was an intelligent person. He passed his Std. VI in 1946. He did his forms I and II at G.H. Franz and in 1949 he proceeded to Lemana Training College where he completed his Junior Certificate. His schooling was again interrupted in 1950, where he had to fulfil his royal responsibilities. In 1951 he proceeded to Wilberforce Institution where he obtained his Higher Primary teachers' Course in 1952. At this College he excelled in Arithmetic and Geography.

Machaka became Principal of Westphalia Primary; at present known as Naledi Primary School in the Bochum area from 1953-1955. He left the post owing to poor remuneration and went to greener pastures in Johannesburg where he worked as a postman in the General Post Office. Lifestyle in Johannesburg was too fast for his liking, so he left the job and went to Jan Hofmeyer High School, where he enrolled for typing and journalism. He started working at Kilnerton College from January 1956 until September 1957. He was transferred to the Department of Bantu Education on promotion as a clerk and typist from October 1957 until 1960 October when he was appointed as a clerk at the University of the North. He served at this University from -

01.12.1960 until he retired in June 1992 as Principal Administrator. As one of the pioneer personnel from the Department of Bantu education's head office, he was sent to the University to prepare for its opening. He introduced the system of admission and registration, and kept students' records, which to date remain in use at the University of the North. Many of the University's administration personnel received guidance and training from him.

1.3 The milieu of Machaka's poetry

Machaka's biographical sketch indicates clearly that he lived in two worlds: the traditional and western. The researcher may rightfully say that the milieu of his poetry can be divided into two or three sections, that is:

1.3.1 Traditional milieu

Like all the early poets in Northern Sotho, Machaka's poetry has its origin in the praise poetry of the past, that is, oral literature, which has been preserved by constant repetition and thus passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. These poems were meant for oral rendition at family clan or tribal gatherings and festivals, because literature is the expression of the mind of a people. Literature is also a reflection of a people's culture. His grandmother has played a very important role in inspiring Machaka's poetry.

In this section we have praise poems like *Kgwadu*, *Maela*, *Kataka* to mention just but a few.

1.3.2 Christian influence

Even though Machaka's parents were late converts of the Lutheran Church, he was a devoted Christian. He was baptised by Moruti Rasebilu Charles Machaka II of the Lutheran Church at Uitkyk No. III Mission in 1947. This is reflected in some of his poems. Poems like *Khunamelang Morena* (Naledi 1981:19), *A re lebogeng* (Mehlodi ya

Polelo 1971:66) and *Dimakatšo* (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971:66) are proof of his Christianity. His having moved from one place to the other as a teacher and as a clerk must also have helped him find an environment to develop his literary talents.

1.3.3 Political/Social milieu

In his book *Seedi*, he expresses his political views especially on the Government resettlement schemes in the poems *Khudugo* and *Bokgoba*.

Machaka seems also to have been against certain practices in his poetry. This is particularly revealed by his love poems, especially *Nomawi* (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971:35-37) and *Naledi* (Naledi: 1981:22-37) where he rejects endogamous type of marriage.

Machaka is also one poet who loved education. In some poems in his books he lauds Kgoši Kgarahara for building schools for his Batlokwa tribe. He is one poet who has realized that education is the key to a successful future.

1.4 Scope and Composition of the Chapters

In this study one proposes to deal with only those poems that are relevant to one's chosen themes. Although literature is universal, the thrust of African poetry is basically different from that of Western literature. In Goodwin's words:

... African poetry by contrast with European is spoken not by an individual, but by the representative of a community.
(Goodwin, 1982:174)

One hopes, therefore, to study the works of the author who speaks on behalf of and addresses himself to the society. The researcher is, however, aware that poetry is not a social document, but a literary genre where theme and artistic devices form an integral part of any author's work. It is with this view in mind that one intends to treat the aesthetics and content not as separate entities but as aspects which reciprocate in constituting poetry.

In Chapter one, which is an introductory chapter, the investigator has given the aim of the study, the poet's biographical sketch together with the milieu of his poetry. In giving this information, one can safely say that this gave the poet's background influence of writing.

Chapter two handles praise poems of Botlokwa kings and brave warriors. The genre has been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Modern poetry, like Machaka's, has its source from oral literature. Mashabela says the following about praise poetry:

Praise poetry was thus gradually weaned from its services to the haughty feats of arms of yore. Heroes in Social and educational spheres were lauded in praise poetry.

(Mashabela, 1979:37)

Some of this type of praise poetry is found in Machaka's praise poems. He praises kgoši Kgarahara for example, for building schools.

Chapter three addresses the theme of protest. He protests vehemently against the unfairness of the white South African regime to the black man of this country who is the legitimate owner of the land.

In Chapter four Machaka's elegies are treated. It will be noted that most of the elegies are elegies of his own people - the Batlokwa.

Chapter five deals with Machaka's love poems. In them one realizes that Machaka is a great poet of love. His love language is expressive.

While Chapter six, which is the last chapter, deals with the general summary of what has been treated.

1.5 Methodology and Approach

African literature lacks a well formulated theoretical approach. The existing theories were formulated in Western or Eastern Europe. These theories are not quite relevant

to the study of African literature. Moleleki agrees with the above assertion:

My contention is that most of the different literary theories at our disposal, which are so zealous to apply to African literature; constitute a reaction to social situations entirely different from the African experience and ideology as manifested in African literature (Moleleki, 1991:1).

The preceding statement is also cited by Serudu, quoting Vilakazi who as early as 1942 remarked as follows:

There is no governing body which could decide on any classic in our Bantu languages in South Africa today. We have no critical opinions of men of taste and knowledge whose qualifications today enable them to judge a work by certain positive skills. (Serudu 1991:12)

Because of the above reasons, the researcher will therefore make use of almost all the modern literary theories, but mostly the analysis will be contextual. The approach will embrace both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. As extrinsic factors condition the production of a work of art, they are, therefore, of crucial importance for its meaningful interpretation.

The researcher will not confine herself to any literary theory, but will move freely from one theory to the other. Theories like Russian Formalism, through Structuralism, New Criticism and Structural or Deconstruction, will be used wherever need arises. This implies borrowing tools freely from any of the existing literary theories because the researcher regards them as complementary to one another.

1.6 Conclusion

It is against this background that we are now prepared to meet Machaka face to face. While the researcher critically evaluates his works; he in turn will be communicating with us.

CHAPTER 2

2. PRAISE POETRY

2.1 Introduction

In his introductory remarks in the book *Mehlodi ya Polelo*, Machaka says:

... Mokgekolo yo mongwe a ema a thupetše ka letsoku le yena a thoma go reta magoši le bagale ba setšhaba sa gabo ... seo ke se kweleng, ka duma ge le bao ba hlokileng sebaka sa go theeletša ... ba tla ba kwa melodi ya sona ... (Machaka 1971:1)

(... One old lady, smeared with red ochre stood up to praise the kings and heroes of her tribe ... What I heard ... I wished that those who were absent could come and listen to its melody ...)

This proves that Machaka, like all other artists, did not work in a vacuum. He was influenced and inspired among other things, by this old lady. He used her as a model, because to achieve perfection one has to emulate perfect models. This is emphasized by Ntuli when he quotes White that a poet

must make a result his very own, he must so naturalize his borrowed flowers that they appear to have grown in his own garden, not been transplanted from elsewhere. (Ntuli 1984:5)

Commenting on praise poetry in African languages, Lestrade observed the following:

Strongly marked dynamic stress, occurring in more or less regular positions in all words of the same language, and the fairly regular incidence of long syllables also usually in the same position, give the bantu utterance a rhythmic quality and a measured and balanced flow not met within languages with regular stresses and more staccato delivery. (Lestrade 1937:248)

Lestrade had to remark in this manner because there are some Western and African literary scholars, due to ignorance concerning the African poetic nature of praise poems, refer to it as disorderly and without any formal pattern.

2.1.1 What is Praise Poetry?

Before going deep into Machaka's praise poetry, the researcher wishes to emphasize that the traditional literature of the Bapedi is purely oral. It has been transmitted from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Praise poems were also, originally oral compositions of kings and brave warriors. Loyalty to the king was strengthened by the recitation of the royal praise poems. Kings and heroes were praised for deeds of bravery they displayed in war. Although praise poetry is oral by nature, it does not disqualify a written poem as a praise poem.

The composer of the traditional praises does not make use of stanza or lines in his creation. The praise is a complete whole. Therefore the modern approach of applying the number of syllables per line method has no place in traditional poetry.

Praise poetry is based on king's and heroes' success throughout life. The length of the poem also depends on his success. Every individual composes his own poem according to the brave things he has done.

2.2 Functional value of Praise Poetry

As pointed out earlier that most praise poems were inspired by war, when affirming this statement, Damane and Sanders say:

War was the supreme test of manhood. For a chief, however, it was more besides, for it was also the supreme test to his leadership, and by boasting of his courage and success, he was in effect recommending himself to his people. Similarly, when a *seroki* praised a chief, he was not merely showering him with personal flattery: he was also presenting him to his followers as a leader worthy of their loyalty and support. (Damane and Sanders 1974:27)

The function of praise poems emanates from the function of praise in general, which is to bring about conformity to the approved modes of behaviour. As the praiser praises the king, he expresses the people's opinion of the king and elicits respect for the king.

In praising the king, the praiser presents him to his people as an object of admiration. This also gives an account of the king's personality and actions, without which it would not fulfil its function as an agent of conformity to the approved patterns of behaviour on the part of his subjects.

In presenting the king as a measuring rod to his people, this serves to strengthen a sense of respect for him and this evokes a feeling of solidarity, as he is the image of the tribe.

Praise poems do not only cement the relationship between the king and his tribe but also unite the tribe with the ancestral spirits. On the other hand, as the audience listens to the praiser this serves to heighten their appreciation.

2.3 Distinctive Features of Praise Poetry

About praise poetry Msimang has this to say:

Praise poetry combines the qualities of an ode, eulogy and epic. As an ode it apostrophizes the king, referring to his personality and physique, pointing out his good qualities. As a eulogy, it lauds the king for his diplomatic and military achievements. As an epic it alludes to his history.

(Msimang 1980:1)

What is said by Msimang in the preceding quotation will become clearer when features that characterize praise poems are discussed. Emanating from these salient features, we shall be able to see in how far they have been carried to the Northern Sotho poetry of today. This will be done by making a literary excursion into those of Machaka's poems, which resemble the traditional praise poetry.

2.3.1 Use of introductory formula

The poem of kgoši Sekwati I in Phala has the formal exclamatory introduction:

Kgomo e a thswa!
(the cow spits)

and the response to it

E gama ke mang?
(who milks it?) (Phala 1935:96)

which are the traditional stylized introduction. The praises are likened to a cow spitting out milk (i.e. being milked). The challenging question, often asked evokes the following response: who milks it? One notices here, the tacit importance of the active verb **-gama**, (to milk). The work **tshwa** (to spit) is a poetic expression of **-swa** (to burn) of milk in the udder of a restless cow which is difficult to milk. It is only an experienced milker who will be able to milk it.

The question, 'who will milk it', is a challenge. Are you man enough? Can you milk it? If that is the case, then account for yourself. It is here where the dauntless and daring picks up the gauntlet!

E gama ke nna ...
(It is milked by me ...)

This formal exclamation is a structural requirement for a praise poem without which the poem would sound incomplete as a traditional heroic poem.

Machaka's praise poems are archetypal. It should therefore not surprise the reader if this feature is absent in his praise poems.

2.3.2 Use of First Person

When identifying the features of praise poetry, Kunene says:

... each warrior who had distinguished himself composed praises for himself, or added more lines to his earlier ones.
(Kunene 1971:1)

From what has been said in the preceding quotation, the individual is given the opportunity to display to the men that he qualifies to be regarded as a real man. This is so because he has passed a test of bravery, of manliness. He has succeeded in tasting the pleasure of rubbing shoulders with death.

He at a point shared the same blanket with death. This is just where the essence of praise lies. **Kgwadu**, in Machaka says:

Ke Kgwadu wa boMmakekana kgotlopo,
.....
Ke makhurumetša a mašako a batho. (Machaka 1971:14)

(I am Kgwadu of the great Kekana's mother)
.....
(I have closed the gates of the people's homestead).

Kgwadu boastfully stands up to tell the crowd that he is related to great people. In short, people should not wonder at his greatness. He also boasts of having murdered all the people to the extent that no one is left in the homestead. He informs them of his bravery, his strength and his fighting ability. This is ably expressed by Cope (1968:21) as follows:

This he does in giving bombastic exhibition of himself:
rushing hither and thither, stopping and starting, leaping,
twirling and twisting, rattling spear against shield, glaring with
ferocious aspect towards an imaginary enemy ...

While Kunene rightfully explains the qualities of a hero as

Physical fitness and endurance, skill at striking and parring,
fleetness of foot, and nerves of steel. (Kunene 1971:2)

That men will go out of their way to seek praise and respect by purposely risking their own lives is innate in mankind. This is clearly illustrated by our youth today who will "move on" a march even though they see merciless policemen or soldiers who aim at shooting them. They are so daring that they defy even the highest authority in the police force. They are heroes whether they triumph or fail.

2.3.3 Allusion

In his praise poems, there is an element of relating a tribe's history, origin and culture. In Machaka one gets this information:

Kgwadu o lebile Tswetla a akga dinao.
(Machaka 1971:12)
(Kgwadu went running to Venda).

In this statement, we are able to deduce that originally the Batlokwa tribe was subject to the Vendas. It is through Kgwadu's heroic deeds that the Batlokwa were freed from Venda domination. More about this feature will be said at a later stage.

2.3.4 Language

About language, Finnegan (says):

The characteristic obscure nature of the language in praises
is partly due to its figurative quality. (Finnegan 1972:22)

Most of the praise poems have eulogues, archaic and lofty language which has reference to historical events or people. The hero may be compared to a snake or his strength may be conveyed by referring to him as a whirl wind. When praising **Kataka**, the poet Machaka says:

*Kataka ke mokopa ramaphetšadifate Balea!
Ke letšeka o kopa ka hlogo le mosela,
Ke sesesedi o tšea le mere ya badimo
Kataka ke namane e tšwago Thaba-Leolo.*
(Machaka 1981:12)

(Kataka is a snake Balea!
He is a two headed snake which attacks at both ends
He is a whirlwind which uproots even the god's trees
Kataka is a calf from Leolo-mountain).

The quality of figurative language displayed in this stanza agrees with what Finnegan has said. Kataka, it is said, is a venomous snake. This means no one can escape his attack. He is a two-headed snake which bites at both ends. He is likened to a whirlwind. Normally this type of wind is very fast and strong. It is said he uproots not only ordinary trees but even the sacred trees of the gods, which are respected by the tribe. Such a warrior who leaves no stone unturned, is dangerous. Originally he comes from Leolo mountains.

It is noteworthy that among other factors in his collection, Machaka has furnished a useful glossary of place names, unknown personalities and unusual terminology. He has also arranged the poem into definite lines and stanzas. In doing so, he has given his praise poems a fixed pattern which makes them readable and therefore more intelligible.

He has successfully adhered to the characteristics of praise poems. As regards form, one finds that the poet does not quite escape the influence of the traditional praise poem. He does not try his hand at, for instance, metre, rhyme or other European poetic forms but employs free rhythm and repetition of words.

What is more impressive about his poems, is the quality of the poetry - depth of thought, sincerity of feeling, cleverly phrased, witty expressions and brilliantly appropriate choice of words. Without doubt, in Machaka's work, we have a successful and laudable attempt of writing which may be called poetry at its best. His poems can be read with interest by both young and old alike.

2.3.5 Imagery

Imagery is the essence of poetry. As Martin Gray defines it,

... it refers to the figurative language in a piece of literature, (metaphors and similes); or all the words which refer to objects and qualities which appeal to the senses and feelings. (Martin Gray 1984:102)

2.3.5.1 Metaphor

It is the richest and most concentrated method of description in poetry. It is evocative because it stimulates the imagination, and emotive in that it stirs emotions. The poet successfully describes Maela as

*Nokakgolo ya Morebene gaRaphahlele
Ke legadima la kgoši ke tsema malaong.*

(Machaka 1971:15)

(The great river of Morebene gaRaphahlele
Lightning of the King I move into bed).

The usage of imagery in his praise poems is effective.

2.3.5.2 Simile

Usage of figures of speech in his praise poetry, makes it striking and memorable. Machaka in *Maela* says

*A re botša ditaba tša go bidiša masogana ...
Morago metse e a swa ...
Bana ba Botlokwa ba hlafa mahlong*

(Machaka 1971:16)

(He told us news that made youngmen boil/angry
Behind where you come from homesteads are burning
Botlokwa children got confused).

2.3.6 Structural Elements

Although we have said earlier that imagery is the essence of poetry, we can add that its effectiveness is greatly increased by the sensible usage of repetition. The following aspects characterize the structure of praise poetry: repetition of the same sound/word, parallelism - which is a variety of repetition found in African poetry and rhythm; to mention but a few.

It should be borne in mind that not all these elements are found in every praise poem. Each praise poem is unique in its own way, with its own structural patterns. This will be seen clearly when the chosen praise poems are discussed fully with relevant and appropriate examples later in this chapter. However, praise poems do have common structural elements.

2.4 Machaka's Praise Poetry - How does it differ from traditional praise poetry?

Northern Sotho poetry can be categorised into two sections, namely, traditional and proto-type. The proto-type poetry, which in modern poetry does not show any loss in the transitional period. Even though it has changed drastically in content, it nevertheless, still has the silver thread of traditional poetry.

Poets of the proto-type era seem to be deeply concerned with life as a phenomenon. The proto-type praise poetry also lacks the popular introductory formula "*Kgomo e a tshwa*" (the cow spits). The proto-type poets try to throw the searchlight into modern day life. Most of the proto-type poets are subjective. Poets like Matsepe, Mamogobo, Puleng as well as Machaka and many more; their writings are concerned with the operation of African culture, philosophical expositions on life and human nature, the clash between cultures and so on. This is evidenced in Mashabela when commenting about Mamogobo's *Leduleputswa*. He asserts:

... Mamogobo nevertheless threw his searchlight on to present day life to try and answer vital questions: what is life? what is the aim of living? Wherein lies the way to happiness?
(Mashabela 1979:39)

Though in the beginning the African poet tried to imitate the European writers, by using rhyme and metre pattern as found in the Western classical and **Romantic** poetry, and of course absent in the African culture, he has not been able to succeed completely. He is hindered by the fact that every literature is born from the culture carried by the language of the people. The cultural background cannot just be dropped like a garment.

The African proto-type poet and the writer have the heritage of their own cultures and languages, but they are warned to be aware of the fast changing world to which the cultures and languages adapt themselves. Acculturation should not find them with their pants down.

It is quite clear that the proto-type poet is deeply rooted in traditional poetry, but he is struggling hard to create something new. He is trying to stand on his feet and face the problems of his soul and era. Some poets even go to the extent of expressing their feelings through a new and foreign medium. This they do in order to spread their message to other nations.

Another influence from the missionaries I presume, is that in proto-type poetry, there is no room for the movement of the body, stamping of feet or the interjection of cheering and ululations. Poetry is no longer a product of communal activity but has become the poetry of an individual, whose spirit evokes the personality and emotions of the individual. Nonetheless, the message it carries, is always loud and clear.

The best praise poems though, are still those long poems telling the story of the deeds of great men and the gods, or the early history of a nation but at the same time blended with a deep awareness of a subjective approach. Mamogobo's and Matsepe's themes for instance are mainly about problems marked by unpleasantness and the changing world. While Machaka on the other hand, dwells mainly on love and human values.

2.4.1 **Kataka** (Naledi 1981:11-14)

Traditionally, a man had to be a man in both appearance and deeds. A real man was thus an idol and ideal husband for all womenfolk. He alone is the one whom any woman would be proud of. No woman would like to marry a coward. It is also true that the death of a warrior was mourned by all, including the womenfolk of the village. About cowards Kunene has this to say:

cowards were not only despised but their seed should be
destroyed ...

(Kunene 1978:8)

That a hero is idolised, is an old practice. This practice of heroworshipping is found even in the scriptures - the story of David and Goliath. David went out of his way to seek praise and honour by deliberately risking his life and fought the mighty Goliath who was a terror to all the Israelite warriors. After succeeding in slaying Goliath, the Israelite women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing. The women merrily sang to one another saying that Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands! I presume each one of these women wished to have been married to the hero David. Such heroes, Machaka praises.

One such a hero is Kataka. In praising him Machaka extols the virtues of his manly prowess; his ability to control fear when facing danger, his bravery and his fighting.

When one reads the poem titled Kataka, one clearly sees that he got his name from his deeds. He was a hero in the true sense of the word. Here the poet like the dramatist, has created an artistic picture of Kataka with words. His control over his language usage, gives us a vivid picture of the warrior, Kataka, as he says:

*... Mantlatla 'a Madiša morwa Matšhe 'a Maleme,
Ke sethakra ... seetapele.
Theledi 'a Marota, Sephikološa masogana,
... Kati wa boLepeta thoba-dingwe-melala;
Mphuladingwe, ... Kataka ...*

*Mola ke tlang lefaseng ke thathantšhitše,
Lerumo lona ke tseba go le taka;
... le go rema dihlogo tša bagale.
... e hweditše banna ba feferilwe!*

*Ba feditšwe ke mangena ke a ngena;
Mogale-noga ka tsupuloga dikobong -
Ka swara bana ba wa Lepono ka latswa,
Banna ba tiantšha meno ba phura mahlodi,
Kataka ke mokopa ...
Ke letšeka o kopa ka hlogo le mosela,
Ke sesasedi o tšea le mere ya badimo,
Ke mmamogašwa wa noka ya Lepelle marumong.*
(Machaka 1981:11)

(Mantlatla of Madiša, son of Matshe of Maleme,
He is dandy ... he is a leader ...
Theledi of Marota who mixes young men with soil.
Kati of Lepeta and Company, the breaker of others' necks;
Wonder of others ... Kataka
Since I came to earth I have cut many into pieces,
I am able to use the spear;
... and to cut brave men's heads.
... it found men being thinned down!

By the ripper, I rip;
Brave-snake I come out from blankets ...
I caught children of the Zulu and I leaked,
Men gnashing teeth and chewing tears,
Kataka is a mamba ...
He bites by head and tail,
He is whirlwind which uproots even the gods' trees,
He is a tornado of Olifants River on the battle field).

This heroic poem indeed praises Kataka. The spirit of heroism is to test strength, of manliness, of daring, it is done in the pursuit of honour. Bowra in Kunene says of the heroic poem:

It works in conditions determined by special conceptions of manhood and honour. It cannot exist unless men believe that human beings are in themselves sufficient objects of interest and that their chief claim is the pursuit of honour through risk.

(Kunene 1971:2)

From the preceding extract, one is aware that the poet has made use of complex and compound words. These words emphasize the ability and the bravery of the hero, Kataka. One is also able to know that the hero was able to conquer and defeat the Mzilikazi's Ndebele in this battle.

The usage of the compound words like *thoba-dingwe melala*, shows Kataka's ability in fighting as he uses many fighting tactics. Kataka is likened to a mamba; a black and green snake. It is a very venomous snake. If it bites a victim its chances of survival are slim indeed.

Kataka is also likened to a whirlwind when he attacks. A whirlwind is a funnel-shaped column of swiftly circulating air. If one is caught up in this kind of wind, one is likely to lose one's bearings. In other words, when Kataka attacks, his swiftness and hard blows confuse the enemy.

Kataka is also likened to a tornado. A tornado is a violent and destructive storm. Where a tornado has struck, there is awful destruction. I presume, if Kataka were given a chance to express how he feels after saving his people from the fearful Mzilikazi's warriors, he would not hesitate to say he feels great. The Batlokwa will remember him for a long time because he freed them from their enemy. This resulted in Batlokwa feeling safe and secured in their homeland.

Compound words used by the poet in this poem are again reinforced by the usage of strong verbs. All these emphasise the fighting ability of the hero Kataka. The speaker relates to us how he fought his enemy. He tells us that, he has shaken Mzilikazi's children, as if they were ripe fruits on a tree, because as he shook the tree the fruits fell. This simply means that when he attacked, his assegai never missed. Enemies fell dead in numbers.

Some verbs used in this poem give us a picture of Kataka's build. It is said,

Kataka **ke namane** e tšwang Thaba-Leolo.
(Kataka is a calf from Leolo- mountain).

(Machaka 1981:11)

Sephikološa masogana
(who rolls young man on soil)

(Machaka 1981:11)

This description gives us a vivid picture of the hero Kataka. That he was a tall and hefty person. His build surely contributed to his ability to fight.

In this poem Machaka has succeeded in bringing before the reader the hero he is praising, as if the hero was relating his deeds direct to the reader. It is true that in any literary work the author's ego will always be touched or reflected. This is said by H. Read:

.. who can doubt that every true man, small or great, leaves
some print of himself on his work, or indeed that he must, if
his work be literature which is so personal a thing.

(Read H 1950:20)

2.4.2 Maela (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971: 15-18)

Within the structural pattern, various figures of speech are used, particularly the metaphor and simile. In Maela we come across the following metaphors:

Ke legadima la kgoši ke tsena malaong
Wena Pabala ge o le poo nna ke tšhukudu
Maela le Sedima ke dinong tša bogalegale.

(Machaka 1971:18)

(I am lightning of the chief, I enter the sleeping place
You Pabala, if you are a bull I am
rhinoceros.
Maela and Sedima are very brave vultures).

In the first line of the preceding excerpt, the warrior likens himself to lightning. Lightning is a flash of brilliant light in the sky, produced by natural electricity, passing between clouds or from clouds to the ground, usually followed by thunder. The striking of lightning is very fast and sometimes fatal. A warrior therefore who is likened to lightning is definitely dangerous. One cannot hide from lightning either. It can strike one even when one is under cover.

Secondly, the warrior warns Pabala that, if he thinks he is strong like a bull, he has to remember that he Maela, is stronger than he is because he is as strong as a rhinoceros. Rhinoceros is a thick-skinned heavily build animal with one or two horns on its nose. When it charges, it kills.

Maela and Sedima are very brave vultures. Sedima should be Maela's colleague. Together they make a very dangerous combination. They have an advantage of being able to see far, like vultures.

These metaphors refer to Maela. Something far different from the literal meaning.

Northern Sotho language is a tonal language in which every syllable bears a significant tone. It creates an atmosphere in the poem.

2.4.3 Masilo Malebogo (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971:18-21)

It is true that Machaka's praise poems, like most of traditional praise poems, are regarded primarily as a source of historical information. The feature, seems to be appreciated more for what it says about the king than for how it is said.

According to information gathered in the poem, *Masilo Malebogo*, is the last born child of chief Ntwamala - Puledi Masenyane and his mother is Mmantatana in Ntwamala's senior house. Masilo, during the political upheavals of Mfomo and Mohleku, was deported from Botlokwa together with his elder brother Jonathan Machaka, by the then Prime Minister of South Africa, Hertzog, in 1938. The Batlokwa leaders then, told Prime Minister Hertzog that they are the cause of the upheaval. The result is, they were prohibited from entering Botlokwa for twenty years. It is further alleged that this Masilo

Malebogo did not fight for kingship. His burning issue was that Kgarahara, his late eldest brother's son as the future king, be sent to school. He wanted the Batlokwa tribe to be ruled by an enlightened king.

This is the type of heroic deeds that the poet expresses. Indeed, these are deeds that deserve praise. It is owing to Masilo's struggle that Kgarahara ultimately went to school and on his return when he became king, built schools for the Batlokwa. Today Batlokwa people rank among the well educated people.

We are moved by Masilo's farewell message to the environment of his birth place. Machaka reports:

*O dumele Mphakane thaba ya botate Motlalagohle,
Šala o tima lerole mohlodi wa poifo ke tlogile,*
(Machaka 1971:19)

(Goodbye Mphakane mountain of my father Motlalagohle
Remain dampening the dust as I the root cause is gone.)

What a brave man! Who upon noticing that cowards who could not face the truth fail, seeks refuge to mother nature. He requests Mount Mphakane to help end his country's problems.

Not only does he bid farewell to the environment of his fatherland, but he also assigns a task to Makgato and Maila to perform when he is gone. He says to them:

*Bana ba bomma ke ba šia le mang ke tloga!
Makgato le Maila le se hloriše dikgaetšedi,
Le se tshwenye Nkgapha le Tinti Mmamoropana.
Le ba lotole dikgadi tša sekoti sa Mmapela,
La se ba hlokomele bogoši bo tla le tšhabela.*
(Machaka 1971:19)

(Children of my mother with whom do I leave them when
I am gone!
Makgato and Maila do not persecute my sisters
Do not persecute Nkgapha and Tinti Mmamoropana

Look well after them these paternal sisters of
Mmapela area
Should you not look well after them you will
lose kingship).

As if Masilo's heroic deeds of urging that Kgarahara must go to school were not genuine enough. Perhaps the poet thought that readers would not accept this as a heroic deed which needs praise! The poet goes on to show us that Masilo was a born hero. This is evidenced by Machaka in the following lines:

*Masilo ke mogale yo a hlabaneng Tyapong
O lwele le Majeremane a seke a hloma sefoka.
Le lerole leo le beng le thunya kua Botsie
Motlokwa o tšere Dithaga a tshela mawatle.
Teng teng a tima mollo wa lewatle le Leso.*

(Machaka 1971:20)

(Masilo is a hero who fought in South West Africa
He fought the German and not hoisted a flag
Even dust that was at Botsie
Motlokwa took Dithaga (his co-initiates) and
crossed the seas
Deep there he ended the war of the Black sea).

Masilo is undoubtedly a hero. He has been a very brave man who could go to various battle fields without hesitation. If one thinks of what happens at the battlefield as described by Kunene:

A man may jump out of a group, run this way and that,
brandishing his spear in the air, in imitation of an encounter
with the enemy in battle.

(Kunene 1985:108)

Surely very few men can go to a battlefield more than once. He did not think of dying in foreign land. He did not think of dying and being buried by the grass, or having his unburied corpse devoured by birds and beasts of prey. He was a man who could stand his man, a hero. This hero seems not to be afraid of death. Perhaps to him war is a noble thing and death in the battlefield is not a personal consequence but for the glory of his fatherland.

2.4.4 Matome S. Machaka (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971:23-24)

Machaka has quite a number of such praise poems in his collections, where he praises today's hero. Not the yesteryear hero who was praised because he was daring and thus went out to test his strength, his manliness in pursuit of honour. Machaka's hero is not driven by starvation or anything of the kind, but is driven by progress. The main aim and duty of this hero is to build the Batlokwa tribe, brick by brick. This is a daunting challenge which has a lasting value to his nation.

Speaking of yesteryear heroes, we think of Masopha, king Moshoeshoe's son who went to his father to ask for permission to go on a cattle raid. His father with the aim of discouraging him, offered him a herd of cattle. He refused the gift of cattle from his father, as he regarded them to be cattle of utility not of honour. To him cattle that are given as a gift are cattle fit for cowards. He wanted to be lauded, he did not want cattle. He wanted to possess cattle that he worked for, cattle that would come from the sweat of his forehead.

Matome thus is a different hero. A Christian hero. He is the first Motlokwa counsellor who went to Lesotho for education. On his return he worked in conjunction with Moruti Charles Machaba I of the Lutheran Church. Together they succeeded in building Sekonye Mission. They introduced Christianity to the Batlokwa nation and that reduced the many bloody wars of the time. To the poet this hero

*Ke yena kgoši Rasegakolla ditšhaba.
Batlokwa ba re ke mofenyi wa leswiswi.*

(Machaka 1971:23)

(He is the king Reminder of (who reminds) the nation.
Batlokwa say he is the conqueror of darkness).

Matome managed to conquer darkness of illiteracy; solved the then prevailing problems without bloodshed. He is a Christian and education hero. He is praised for bringing a change in life by eliminating the bloody fights amongst the Batlokwa nation. This is evidenced by the stanza that follows:

*Ke Matome mogolo wa Sehlakola leswiswi
Ke selwakapene wa boPuledi Masenyane;
Ntwa o e hlabana ka pene a dutše a dutše,
Kua Sekonye ga boMatome le morena Sehlakola.*

(Machaka 1971:24)

(He is Matome the elder who conquered darkness
He fights with a pen, he of Puledi Masenyane
He fights with a pen seated down
At Sekonye at Matome and Sehlakola's place).

This hero Matome, has realized that the pen is mightier than the sword. Indeed he conquered many things by mere writing. People became educated and in that way civilization improved the life pattern of the Batlokwa. The bloody fights became things of the past, as they were attending school during the week and on Sundays they were taught how to pray.

2.4.5 Kgwadu (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1971:12)

Man is a link in the social system in which he grows up. Praise-poems are embedded in his social life. Praise poems, therefore, reflect the background of a man's social life. Hence his status in a society depends very much on this fact. A warrior of great reputation usually goes by a variety of names. Names have a bearing on certain distinguishing features that combine to form his character. These are reflected in Kgwadu's praise:

*Ke Kgwadu wa boMmakekana kgotlopo,
Kgwadu ahlama re go bone ganong -
Ganong ga Kgwadu go hwibitše perr;
O jele Moloto le Poopedi a Mothokwa.
Ke makhurumetša a mašako a batho.
A boMampotu a Molema a Sefela.
O rile Tswetla le Moletši a phuma,
A fetša madira ka nilha ya lerumo.
Kgwadu o swere lerumo la mabaibai;
Mahlahla a lona ke a legadima la dipula.*

(Machaka 1971:12).

(He is Kgwadu of Mmakekana and Company the great,
 Kgwadu open your mouth, so that we see your palate -
 Kgwadu's palate is blood red;
 He has eaten Moloto and Poopedi of Mothokwa,
 He is the destroyer of people's kraals;
 Of Mampotu and company of Molema of Sefala.
 In Venda and Moletši he conquered,
 He destroyed the soldiers with the point of a spear
 Kgwadu has a glittering spear;
 Which is as swift as lightning).

The significance of this associative reference is that every hero of a praise poem is proud to be associated with brave people. In this poem, Kgwadu associates himself with MmaKekana and company the great! These associates are termed by Kunene as

Naming eulogues which are coined as aliases for the hero ...
 and eulogues of associative reference.
 (Kunene 1971:35).

His lineage of MmaKekana and company is related to MmaKekana and company the great. This to Kgwadu is a challenge to be identified within the family of great people.

Constant linkage is common in praise poetry. Ideas are linked together through repetition of words, word groups and concepts from line to line. This happens in various ways. For example, at the beginning of a line and it is repeated in the next two or three lines. This is depicted as follows:

a.....a.....cd
 Kgwadu wa boMmaKekana Kgotlopo,
 a.....e.....f.....g.....f..
 Kgwadu ahlama re bone ganong -
 (Machaka 1971:12)

(Kgwadu of MmaKekana and company the great,
 Kgwadu open your mouth, so that we see your palate).

We have used the letters of the alphabet to label the words under discussion as follows:

a b c d
 ↓
 a e f g h

The preceding two lines have the same word at the beginning of a line (parallelism), which is an element of structure of a heroic poem. Machaka has successfully used it.

Sometimes words are repeated from right to left. This is termed an oblique line of repetition pattern. It is successfully illustrated in the following line,

a.....b.....c.....d....
 re go bone ganong
 d.....e.....f.....
 Ganong ga Kgwadu
 (Machaka 1971:12).
 a.....b.....c.....d....
 d.....e.....f.....
 (... that we see your palate -
 Palate of Kgwadu).

This type of repetition permits extension of the idea introduced in the first line which is also an oblique sense of repetition with right to left slant.

At times a left to right repetition is also found in some praise poems, as in the following example:

a b c d e
 Kgwadu ahlama re go bone.
 f g a h i
 Ganong ga Kgwadu go hwibitše
 (Machaka 1971:12).
 a b c d e
 f g a h i
 (Kgwadu open your mouth so as to allow us to see
 the Palate of Kgwadu is red ...).

The repetition of word/s in the preceding and succeeding lines come automatically and unconsciously to the reciter. Repetition in itself does not create poetry. The use of one repetition technique which is parallelism or linking has an influence in praise poems. This happens when the beginning word/s or phrases of two successive lines of poetry are the same. This technique of repetition is illustrated as follows:

a	b	c	d	e	f.....
Dinoka	aka	ke	moša	o	batilwe

a	b	c	g	h	i
Dinala	aka	ke	ntlha	tša	marumo

a	b	c	j	k	l
Le nko	aka	ke	hlaka	ya	leotša.

(Machaka 1971:13).

a	b	c	d	e	f
↓	↓	↓			
a	b	c	c	g	h
↓	↓	↓			
a	b	c	j	k	l

(Hips as if it's a plastered courtyard
Nails as if it's sharp points of spears
Nose as if it's a millet stalk).

In this vertical line repetition pattern, actors, actions, qualifying and modifying expressions may always be either compared or contrasted with the most pleasing effect. These qualities distinguish poetry from prose in all literatures. It is through the usage of these features that poetry has a greater richness and a greater concentration and thus memorable.

2.4.6 *Kgarahara* (Mehloodi ya Polelo (1971:12))

Unlike in traditional praise poems where praises are showered upon someone who has done an heroic deed and proved his valorous worth, Machaka praises for example the Batlokwa kings for the success they attained in ruling the tribe peacefully. He lauds them for building schools and many other good things they did for their communities.

In introducing education, they have given their subjects a source that sustains their day to day existence. A tribe which has built itself schools, is enlightened. It is a tribe which has kindled fire for itself that will withstand forces that are likely to render it extinct. This is an untainted truth. The Batlokwa tribe have kindled an educational fire which will keep them alive for a long period of time.

A hero is usually a man who feels an obligation towards those under his command. An example of such a hero is Kgarahara. Machaka, when praising his heroic deeds says

*O letšatši wena morwa Puledi Masenyane,
Gobane mo o gatileng wena, re bone seedi;
Gape o boletše wa theeletšwa gohlegohle,
Ruri re nyakile go hwa re sešo ra bona!*

(Machaka 1971:11)

(You are the sun, you Puledi Masenyane's son,
Because where you have treaded, we saw light;
You spoke and you were listened to, by all
Surely we nearly died before we could see!)

In those days school buildings were unknown. He built the schools for his tribe and they were thankful and happy. Their children got the privilege of attending schools. They were taught to read and write.

Kgarahara, a Batlokwa king, ruled the Batlokwa from 1937 until 1971. He took over from his paternal uncle Matome Jonathan Machaka who ruled the tribe after the death of his elder brother, who is Kgarahara's father. Kgarahara could not be made king after the death of his father, as he was still a young boy. During Matome's reign, there was no peace in Botlokwa. The tribe was even divided into two groups. It was a blessing to the tribe when Kgarahara took over from his uncle and thanks to God, he was able to bring peace among the members of the tribe. Such a successful king surely has done a heroic deed which deserves praise.

That he took over from his uncle when there were clashes among the tribe is reflected in the lines that follow:

*O rwele kgare ya bogoši madimo a foka,
Lerole la Botlokwa le thunya ka gohle,*

*Fela Motlokwa tšeo o di hlotše tšohle
A tšea bana ba gagwe a phuthela maphegong.*

(Machaka 1971:11)

(He was crowned during troubled times,
There was dust all over Botlokwa;
But Motlokwa overcome everything
He took his children and put them under his wings).

The success of king Kgarahara as a ruler lies in his humble but firm way of ruling. Though very strict and firm, he gave full attention to the rich and the poor. He never looked down upon anybody. His heroic deed of building schools for his people succeeded because of his firmness. He taught his people to lead a harmonious life. This is in its own way, a bold and manly challenge that any earthly man could boast of.

When praising his behaviour Machaka says

*Ke tele ga a ke a šaetša Kgarahara ntweng;
Ke sethakga bopapa a Tsherane a Mabjaneng,
Ke kgoši ya dikgoši ramogolo a Ntwamala:
Gape ga a ke a galala lentšu la mošiwana;
Botho bja gagwe Batlokwa ba re ke moriti,
Boleta bja Kgarahara bo khudušitše poifo.*

(Machaka 1971:11)

(He is able, he never goes wrong in the battlefield
Kgarahara;
He is neat Tsherane of Mabjaneng's father,
He is king of kings Ntwamala's uncle;
He never undermines the meek's word;
His kindness Batlokwa say is a shadow,
Kgarahara's politeness has dispelled fear).

It is only a wise man like Kgarahara who knows that a polite and kind behaviour will always make a king's subordinates obedient.

2.4.7 William Shakespeare (Naledi 1981:68-71)

The type of heroes that Machaka praises vary. Another fascinating hero that he praises for his unique heroic deeds is William Shakespeare, one of the greatest English dramatists. After lauding his deeds, he sums them up in a very peculiar manner, thus -

*William Shakespeare ke seedi sa matsatši ohle,
William Shakespeare ke serumula sa lena bareti,
William Shakespeare ke letšatši go lena batsebi,
William Shakespeare ke pula ya lena bangwadi,
William Shakespeare ke modingwana wa mangwalo,
William Shakespeare ke makgolo wa lefase lohle.*
(Machaka 1981:71)

(William Shakespeare is the light of all days,
William Shakespeare is the torchbearer of you poets,
William Shakespeare is the sun to you the educated,
William Shakespeare is the rain of you authors,
William Shakespeare is a god of writings,
William Shakespeare is the grandmother of the universe.)

Machaka's end product is a unique type of a rich art with an appeal to the recipient. There is quality in his poetry, the depth of heart, sincerity of feeling and brilliantly appropriate usage and choice of words.

We know for certain that Shakespeare was a playwright and poet. He is famous for writing tragedy, comedy and historical plays as well as numerous sonnets. His plays reflect both country and town life. From the many production of the many famous works like **Romeo and Juliet**, **The Merchant of Venice**; to mention but a few, it is a fact that he has written good work. This is said beyond doubt. Some of his written works are **Macbeth**, **Hamlet**, **Tempest**, and **The Winter's Tale**.

Shakespeare's heroes and heroines are very important people in the community. It is these people who had the opportunity to watch his plays; which are written mostly in verse form. Most of the humorous scenes deal with ordinary people rather than aristocrats, so that we laugh at lower-class people more often than at upper-class ones.

Shakespeare's plays are read and performed throughout the world. These plays, as it is said, are not written for one century, but for all times. One might even add that he wrote for all places and all races.

Having known more about this hero, we can clearly and loudly state that Machaka's praise poems refer to independent heroic deeds which originated as a written art form. Although the work is not part of the oral heritage of a specific tribe or group, it is structurally and thematically cast in the same manner as the traditional poem. The end product is a unique type of a rich art which appears to the recipient. This poem expresses what is universal in human behaviour, in other words, the poet has created poetry which touches human hearts throughout the ages.

When one reads Machaka's poems, one realizes that he is fond of education and he is a Christian. Even though in his praise poems the "open sesame" of the traditional heroic praise poetry is absent, he is fond of praising people with personal talents that breed laudable feats.

2.5 Conclusion

From what has been discussed, one may conclude that praise poems still flourish. Ancient praises still bring inspiration and a formal mode of literary expression. It still performs its old functions of recording outstanding events, expressing praise and recording the history of a people.

CHAPTER 3

PROTEST

3.1 Introduction

Black South African protest poetry is written mostly in both African languages and English. This type of poetry was born out of oppression and rejection of Blacks by Whites and it exposes frustration of the black man. It nevertheless gives the black man a sense of belonging together and suffering together. Most of all it gives them a sense of solidarity in the struggle. For quite a long time this type of poetry was rejected by the Whites. On this Mphahlele says:

... South African writers are fashioning a proletarian literature on terms that are unacceptable to the white ruling class. They are not considered by the Whites as any asset at all to any but their own communities. But, like every other African, they keep on, digging their own feet into an urban culture of their own making. This is fugitive culture borrowing here, incorporating there, retaining this and rejecting that. But it is a virile culture. The clamour of it is going to keep beating on the walls surrounding the already fragmented culture of the Whites who choose to be assimilated or be sport out.

(Mphahlele 1974:264)

The value of protest poetry emerged in South Africa in the twenties and thirties through poets like Mqhayi, Dlhomo, Es'kia Mphahlele and others. They wrote in their languages and in English. There were also newspapers like **Bantu World**, **Illanga Lase Natal** which also protested against current issues like labour policies of the thirties. In the fifties we had protest poets like Mamogobo who opposed vehemently the white man's act of taking away the black man's land, Africa.

The emergence of the Black awareness movements in the mid seventies fuelled the spirit of militancy in black poetry in South Africa. This type of poetry came to be regarded as Post-Sharpville poetry and Soweto poetry. It is the type of poetry that has come to dominate among the young black poets.

Black people's protest poetry has come to be seen as people's poetry as it speaks against oppression of the black man. It is not found in Northern Sotho poetry alone but it also characterises most of the black poetry that has emerged in South Africa today.

Protest poetry speaks to people in terms of their feelings and ideas about the world. As the poet finds himself caught up in a situation where he is oppressed his aim therefore is to make his fellow oppressed aware of the happenings around him. He aims at shaking his fellow oppressed from their deep sleep and draw their attention to the pain of oppression. Within his protest lies a vision. He sees for his people a change; a new world within the old world.

Ntuli considers protest poetry as committed poetry. To him committed poetry is the work written with the aim of conveying strong convictions about some issue or situation. Ntuli says:

When the poet exposes the evils of irregularities he notes around him, he wants to arouse in his readers a state of disquietude which will lead to some kind of reform.

(Ntuli 1984:34)

On committed art Ntuli quotes Otomese who says that there is no art for art's sake. There has to be commitment in any piece of art, even when one writes for entertainment, that is, commitment. Milubi agrees with Otomese on committed art because he says that this committed art must not perish; it must withstand the test of time by being quality commitment.

Milubi borrows the words of Chinua Achebe when he says:

I believe it's impossible to write anything in Africa without some kind of protest. Even those early novels that look like very gentle recreations of the past - what they were saying in effect, was that he had a past. That was protest, because there were people who thought we didn't have a past. What we were doing was to say politely that we did - here it is.

(Milubi 1988:199)

Chinua Achebe above is trying to say to us that most of the literary works written by Blacks is protest in nature. Yes, most of the poems by black South Africans like Madiba, Mamogobo, Machaka, Lentsoane, Puleng, to quote but a few, express with anger the theme of protest against oppression. This fact is among others, proved by the following poem by Mamogobo entitled **Afrika Bowa**:

*Bowa Afrika fase la borre twehlanyadišhaba,
Mohlalabonolo thari ya bana ba mosadi yo moso,
Mpho badimo beng megola madulagodimo maakaakaleng,
Bowa wena naga boroko makhura a bana ba mosadi yo
moso.*

(Mamogobo 1951:126)

(Come back Africa the land of our fathers which causes
nations to fight,
The fertile land, the slingbag for the children
of the Black mother,
Gifts of God's owner of the veld, high dwellers
of the lofty places,
Come back you the peaceful land, the cream of
the children of the black mother).

The message in the preceding excerpt is clear. The title of the poem also sums up the message. It is a cry of someone who has been robbed of his valuable possession.

According to the poem, it leaves no doubt as to whom Africa belongs. It does not only belong to the present Blacks, but they have inherited it from their fathers; who also in turn inherited it from their fathers; and it must therefore in no uncertain terms be returned to the legitimate owners. South African blacks were robbed of their land by the white man on arrival to South Africa in 1652. Surely it is surprising when the Whites claim to have discovered this country whereas they found people living in it. This deprivation comes from selfishness and foolhardiness of the oppressor; it brings discomfort to the oppressed.

Some of Lentsoane's protest poems sound like pleas, because he is not so hard hitting as Machaka. In his poems like Botshwelamare, he pleads thus:

*Hle bagolo se re nyorolleng fela
Re thušeng ka madulo,
Re iketle bo theoge,le,
Re swane le batho.*

(Lentsoane 1981:30)

(Please elders do not only quench our thirst,
Help us with resting places,
For us to relax so that the drink can
go down well,
For us to be like other people).

His plea, though, urges action. Lentsoane's protest poems are an eye-opener. He presents his protest poems in an artistic manner. At one time he is sarcastic, and on the other he criticises the effects of apartheid. Serudu has realized Lentsoane's mode of his protest poems when he says:

Lentsoane is a very observant and imaginative poet. He is able to take stock of the happenings and changes that take place in his environment. Incidents and happenings which slip the eyes of most of us are fruitfully used by Lentsoane as poetic material.

(Serudu 1981:96)

Lentsoane only tried to "wrap" his protest poems in attractive packages, but unfortunately the people are able to see through them.

An appropriate example of Lentsoane's protest poem, *Bahlatswadiaparo* (Washerwomen) where he shows their struggle, working for peanuts while their counterparts

*.... ba kwakwaletše ditulong,
Ba lokišwa meriri
Bangwe ba bolailwe ke dithai.
Go tšhitšhila basadi,
Ba tekateka mebileng,
Dihlogong ba swareleditše thaba ya diaparo.*

(Lentsoane 1981:32)

(... recline in comfortable chairs,
Their hair being plaited.
Others with their ties on,
Women are staggering,
Wobbling in the streets,
On their heads supporting a mountain of clothes).

This is protest at its best. If one would think deeper, and realize that these women use their own baths and washlines for this laundry; not ignoring the ironing fire. Worse still, some did not have water in their yards. They therefore had to draw water from far.

This is proof enough that throughout ages, Blacks have been oppressed and victimized. Furthermore Lentsoane draws a very gruesome picture of how the powers that be treated the black man. When they resettled black communities they also exhumed their graves. This ghastly action is aptly recorded by Lentsoane in the following poem:

Khutšo e kae?

*Ke e hlokile ke sa totoba,
Ke ntšhitše mahlo dinameng,
Ge ke sa hlwe ke bolela gona!
Le ge ke robetše nka se e bone.
Gobane malao a ka ba ka no a tloša,
Ba re ke robetše nagengtšhweu;
Ke swanetše go thothela nagengntsho.
Khutšo e kae?*

(Lentsoane 1981:63)

Where is peace?

I missed it while still alive,
With my eyes wide open,
What more when I can no longer speak!
I have tried, I have had it,
I have given up the struggle,
Even when I am asleep (dead) I will not see it.
For my bed (grave) can be intruded upon,
Saying I am sleeping in a white spot,
I have to trek to a black spot.
Where is peace?)

Blacks have been uprooted from their homes, dead or alive. Indeed the black man has been haunted mercilessly for ages.

Puleng, being the youngest of the protest poets, has the same lament. He is also influenced by Mamogobo. This influence is mostly felt in this young poet's theme and style. I presume, he imitates him because the conditions of his era are still the same as those of Mamogobo's era. Nothing has changed. Instead things are becoming worse by the day.

Puleng's approach to this theme is very serious. His heart and all the helpless black South Africans' hearts bleed when they think that they are slaves in the land of their birth. Puleng's protest is also the critical observation of conditions and resistance, being a demand for change. His feeling is that time has come for action, not for negotiation and certainly not for continued submission. To him the volcano must come to life. He blatantly tells the Whites that

*Ga ke a hlaba dithaka mo ga se maropeng
Mo ke gae, bokhutšo bja bana ba mobu wokhwi
Ga se bahlanka batho ba, ga se bahlankedi.*
(Puleng 1983:52)

(I have not planted melon seeds here, it is not at the ruins
Here is home, resting place for children of this soil
They are not servants these people, they are not
employees).

Puleng is not satisfied to be second class citizen in his own motherland. This he does not accept. He does not only object the second class citizenship but he is also concerned about the ruthless, brutal assault on South African mineral sources by the Whites.

*Mahumo a tšwile maleng a naga
Boteng bja yona bja šala bo ponapona
Lefase ka bophara la kgona senko.*
(Puleng 1980:38)

(Wealth came out from the intestines of the land
Its inside remained naked
The whole world looked on in distress).

Puleng's mood of presentation is an angry mood. He sounds very angry. Who can be happy really if someone's aim is to torment you by taking your land and plundering its wealth while you are helplessly looking on. With these harsh words he is trying to move his people to immediate action against the Whites. This disgust is echoed by Puleng in no less than five of his poems.

The poet reveals the dehumanizing effect of apartheid to the horror of the reader. Second class citizenship imposed by Whites upon Africans in their own motherland is unacceptable. Machaka is painting a true picture of life in South Africa as he experienced it. Not only he alone, but almost all South African black protest poets. Mogale quotes Egudu who says

In South Africa, strangers have become landlords, as it
were, and forced the owners of the land into cultural and
physical exile.

(Mogale 1993:143)

Surely this is ruthless and brutal of the South African whites.

3.2 Protest in the poetry of Machaka

We are cursorily going to examine some poems with a view to highlighting the voice of protest in Machaka's poems. The purpose is to show what Machaka has to say about the sociopolitical system in South Africa.

The selected poems cover different but crucial issues in the lives of South African blacks. It must be pointed out emphatically that these poems are only a small fraction of the corpus of poetry and literature in different subtle ways of decrying apartheid and oppression.

The definition of protest as given by the **English Advanced Oxford Dictionary** (1974:504) is:

... to give a formal (often written) declarative against some proposal, decision, procedure or action to remonstrate.

Mogale agrees with the above definition when he says:

Protest writing stems from dissatisfaction with what exists, and also from the belief that someone is responsible for this state of affairs. Protest is usually directed to someone who is dissatisfied against another who is interested in maintaining the status quo.

(Mogale 1993:6)

Authors often protest in order to discourage society or even authorities against evil, oppression, to cite but a few examples. Quoting Shakespeare, Marie Heese et al (1978:87) say:

All the world's a stage
And all men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances ...

(Heese M. et al. 1978:87)

This quotation explains the white man who cheated the black man of this possession in a very dramatic way. History tells us he started by taking the black man's cattle by barter; in exchange of a knife he got from the black man a big beast. Until at the end where he cheated him of his own motherland.

Machaka's protest poetry is intended to lash out such behaviour. It is intended as a weapon in the struggle against poverty and oppression. Undeniably, the South African struggle by Blacks will never be won with poems, though many of these protest poems do stir their audience to action. His hard-hitting poetry proves that the pen is still mightier than the sword.

Yes, poetry is a weapon. It is always best to have a weapon that can pierce and get to the bone quickly rather than a blunt instrument. Machaka has succeeded in using this sharp instrument by writing articulately, employing all the skills of protest poetry. Protest poetry has become a tool of political struggle and undeniably an effective one. This is evidenced by Finn thus:

Poets sing about life, nature, the trails of existence, the mysteries, of time here and time beyond. Poets who protest against oppression sing about all these too; but their main theme concerns the tribulations they and their people endure, their misery and ways to assuage, resist or overcome it. This is their inspiration.

(Finn 1990:103)

Machaka's main theme in his protest poems concerns the tribulation he and his people endure, their misery and ways to soothe, resist or even overcome it. This is his inspiration!

The South African blacks have been oppressed for centuries. They have been denied the right to vote at public elections; they were uprooted from the motherland at the desire of pernicious government. They were degraded and denied their human rights, particularly under the Verwoerdian government. At this moment, Blacks are fighting for equality in their own country, because they are second class citizens in the land of their birth.

The South African blacks under the Nationalist regime had to carry their "*dompas*" (passbook) and if they failed to produce it upon demand by a policeman, they were thrown into a pick-up (police van), where they would be taken to jail and stand trial. At times they would be sentenced to months or even years! Blacks had laws prohibiting them from free habitation in the urban areas as well as free movement. For the Blacks, everyday is a challenge in survival, not only in the physical sense but also, spiritually and mentally. Hence most of the Blacks' protest poems are mainly for a demand for change.

Most Blacks' protest poems are involved in the people's severe physical and mental suffering and are committed to their people's struggle. The oppression over the many years, has had a dehumanizing effect on them which left an indelible mark in their lives. One often asks oneself that even if the Bible tells one to forgive and forget, will the South African blacks ever forget, what their fellow South African whites have done to them under the apartheid regime?

The same question is asked by Serote in his moving poem "Behold mama, flowers" when he reflects the humiliation of a black man so bitterly:

How can I forget, even if I want to forget that in the
fathoms of the sea are bones screaming bones still chained
and blood stained
How can I forget
that even the skies winked and blinked as the
soil fell,
On men digging gold beneath the earth ...
how can I forget
That when the chains were hurting,
we fell down,
Death walking towards us in haste as if a
train passing by ...

(Finn 1990:109)

Even though the poor Blacks were not forced to go and work in the mines, they had no option because they wanted their families to survive with that meagre income. The gold they are digging is for the white man but on the black man's motherland. Who can forget this?

Will the victims of apartheid be able to live up to the newly found slogan? Let bygones be bygones. All Blacks are beset by pain, suffering and despair that at times it is not easy to express.

Machaka has not written many protest poems. Most of his poems as it has already been stated, dwell on love and praise. In his protest poems, few as they are, he is brutal in his onslaught.

Throughout the ages, authors have been found to express their displeasure about certain conditions and practices. When the poet exposes the evils or irregularities he sees around him, he wants to arouse in his readers a state of anxiety which will lead to some kind of action. Action that will belong to the past, present and the future.

3.2.1 *Khudugo* (Seedi 1979:20-21)

During the apartheid era it would seem that the South African whites, pretended that Blacks are not God's creatures. Their greed for wealth made them overlook this.

This state of affairs makes Machaka very bitter. The Whites have so much more than they need that they are rendered uncomfortable thereby - they become puffed up and in their pride oppress their poor countrymen.

The white man in his abundant wealth forcefully removes the black man on his fertile piece of land to a sandy and or barren mountainous land - away from his fertile land which is re-occupied by Whites. Small footpaths lead to their homes which are in a mountainous area. In this village, the call is not for provision of tarred roads but for ordinary gravel roads. Life for Blacks is an uphill struggle for survival. The success of crops is entirely dependent on rain. The village is a symbol of apartheid. To add insult to injury - the removal of the residents from their bona fide birth place was done in the middle of the night. This I suppose, had a motive that they lose track.

This Machaka condemns in very strong words in *Khudugo* (migration). The protest comes out loudly and very clearly. What Machaka cannot tolerate is the idea of being forced to move from his birthplace to a strange and hostile place. No words could have expressed the bitterness and the humiliation than this stanza:

*Khudugo ga e botse e a hlaba,
Yona re bone e letša diputswa,
Banna ba kgapha mahlodi e se bana,
Ba llela mabu a ba thupeditšeng,
Khudugo tseba o moeti wa sehlogo.*

(Machaka 1979:20)

(Trekking is bad it is painful,
It makes the greyheaded cry,
Men wiping tears like children,
Crying for their motherland,
Trekking know that you are a cruel visitor.)

What self-righteousness in these Whites! They believe they are either demigods or the only creatures of God. They believe they have supreme power over all the God-created creatures.

This village was a thriving community for ages. The villagers used the nearby farmland to grow maize and rear cattle and sheep. But all that ended overnight. Their houses were bulldozed and the people were unceremoniously dumped far away. The apartheid regime drove the residents from their homes in the middle of the night. Such humiliation is without choice a bitter pill to swallow.

It is necessary to remember that to everyone the true religion is that system which he, by virtue of experience and confession, regards as his own. We find therefore that in any nation, however primitive it may be, a religious system exists.

We accept therefore that a religious system is everywhere and always connected with the belief in the supernatural. The attitude of man towards such powers is usually that of respect and submissiveness, characterised by prayers and sacrifices.

Though believing in *Modimo*, the Blacks believe that He is far removed and is no longer directly connected with the people on the earth. He is accessible only by means of the spirits of the forefathers and through them. He is approached in connection with rain in times of drought.

Ancestral worship is based on the belief that the spirits of the departed maintain connection and contact with their living relatives. The same respect accorded to old people is shown to the dead. The oldest ancestor is held in the highest esteem. At death the spirits of the ancestors acquire supernatural power and are therefore feared.

They are also the guardians of the nation's customs and they expect the living to honour those customs. By their supernatural power the ancestral spirits are able to bless, to protect and also to punish the living. All these explain Machaka's outcry in this stanza when he says:

*Ga ke furalele fela dithaba -
Le malao a borakgolo ke a tlogetše,
Ke dumile fela ge nkabe ke a kuke,
Ke itshepelele le marapo a madi a ka,
Nna ke šohle le ona mašohlošohlong.*

(Machaka 1979:21)

(Not only do I leave the mountains behind -
The graves of my grandfathers also remain behind,
My wish, was to take them along,
Go with the bones of my blood,
So that I go deep into the wilderness with them.)

The drama that is depicted in the various stanzas of this poem, symbolise the relentless struggle of Blacks to break the power of the White people of this country.

Yes, throughout the ages, black South Africans have been victimised and murdered. They have been uprooted from their homes. They have been beaten down so many times when they tried to stand up against oppression.

Machaka in this poem, is committed to his people's struggle. Nkathazo ka Mnyayiswa, "A day in our life" quoted by Finn says

ask any black man
he'll tell you
without looking it up in a dictionary ...
what pain is ...

(Finn 1990:109)

because all are beset by pain - they know it only too well.

Blacks can rightfully use the Jew's words by Finn where he says:

He who comes to compare will compare it thus:
He was tortured like (a Jew) an African.
Every fear, every anguish, every loneliness, every agony,
Every scream, every weeping in this world,
He who compares things will say:
This is the (Jewish) African kind.

(Finn 1990:130)

We are deeply moved by the last stanza in *Khudugo* which says:

*Wena moemaemiša batho tseba se!
Ge e le ditumedišo tša ka di fedile,
Go wena ke go fa letsogo la lehloyo,
Gobane o nkhudušitše ke sa nyake.
Wa ntloša nageng ya maswi le dinose.*

(Machaka 1979:21)

(You persecutor of people know this!
As for my greetings you'll never get,
To you I give a hand of hatred
Because you made me trek against my will
You removed me from the land of abundance).

The tone of the whole poem is dignified and sombre in keeping with the seriousness of the contents.

3.2.2 *Bokgoba* (Seedi: 1979:54)

In this poem Machaka mirrors what it means to be Black. He has succeeded in chanting his sorrows in order to express his feelings, feelings which are a painful cry of the heart. He uses the language of men, the language of prose. He chose the language calculated to draw the correct response from his readers.

The word 'slave' is defined in The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1989:1197) as

a person who is the property of another and is forced to work for him.

Slavery was common in those days and the slave was not regarded as a subject of rights. It would appear that the slave was subjected to the law of things. It must also be remembered that in societies in which technological development was comparatively primitive, slavery supplied the manpower, not only the labour power, but it also had to function in much the same ways as mechanical appliances.

That is what led Machaka to relate with this piercing sword:

*Re be re fata dihlare ka manala ona a a rena,
Ge re fihlile medung ra thoma go kakatlalela,
Go fihla re e tumula ka medu le metswana.
Re be re panwa bjalo ka dikgomo.*

(Machaka 1979:54)

(We used to dig trees with our own nails,
On reaching the roots we would begin to pull,
Until the tree is pulled out with all its
roots and rootlets.
We used to be harnessed like oxen).

This type of behaviour surely is the fruit of greed and selfishness. Imagine being owned by somebody, while the Bible tells us that we are all His children, irrespective of colour or creed.

Furthermore, slaves could be very valuable objects and could be a source of great wealth for the individual. Poor people had no choice - they were seen as different and inferior - indeed, sub-human.

*Mehleng yeo motho o be a rekwa e se pudi,
Ge mong a lapile ka yena a fetišetšwa pele.*

(Machaka 1979:54)

(In those days a person was bought even though not a goat
When the owner was tired of him, he passed him on to
another).

The poetry of Machaka is the reaction of someone in agony, an agony caused not only by losing his "motherland", but also by witnessing everyday the ruthless exploitation of

the Blacks by the Whites. He also refers to this when he says:

Seo re se filwego o ka re ke toro fela.

(Machaka 1979:55)

(What we were told was like a mere dream).

When emancipation of the slaves was pronounced, the poor exploited people did not believe what they were told. To them slavery was their mode of living. The announcement was unbelievable.

Machaka wrote this protest poem, many years ago. His ingenuity and far sightedness now seem like prophecy. What Machaka has written in the poem **Bokgoba**, we may rightfully say was a prophecy.

It was never dreamed of South Africa being a liberated country. What has happened is incredible. It is not yet believed that South Africa has entered into a democratic phase of government or not.

Blacks lived in bondage for long with the result that they accepted it as a normal way of living. The wrongs inflicted upon the Blacks were accepted as a normal way of living. Deep in their hearts though, the Blacks knew that one day liberation will come.

On the other hand Machaka warns the oppressed younger generation in this stanza against accepting slavery when he says:

*O di kwele tše di bonwego ke rena dikgagatha,
Taelo ya ka go lena thari-ye-sesane e rwaleng,
Le se tsoge le ralokile ka yona bophelong,
Le emeng ka maoto le epolleng peu ya Bokgoba,
Le se tsoge le dumeletše bo mela mo mohlaleng.*

(Machaka, 1979:55)

(You have heard what we the grey-headed have undergone,
My advice to you young folk, keep it,
Never ever play with it like a toy in life,
Be firm and eradicate the seed of slavery,
Never ever allow it to germinate here on earth).

As it is, South Africa has just witnessed the final blow to apartheid. South Africa has duly offered a democratic kind of government which is made possible by negotiation and co-operation between the apartheid regime under the leadership of President F.W. de Klerk and the A.N.C. President N.R. Mandela. As history is being made, this must have far reaching implications for South Africans, but especially for the writing of poetry of the future.

The post-apartheid poetry I presume, will be poetry of love and hope. It will be poetry of reconciliation and reconstruction, poetry where hatred will be replaced by love. It is also the wish of every peace loving South African that the words of the prophet Isaiah 11:6-9 become a reality.

Wolves and sheep will live together in peace and leopards
will lie down with young goats. Calves and lion cubs will
feed together, and little children will take care of them.
Cows and bears will eat together, and their calves and cubs
will lie down in peace. Lions will eat straw as cattle do.
Even a baby will not be harmed if it plays near a poisonous
snake.

It is the wish for the future of the new South Africa; to have abundant peace. On the issue of reconciliation literature, Robin Malan as cited by Milubi says:

We actually need literature to enable our young people to
get to know one another, to cut across and to break down
the old "separateness", that political, social and educational
structure is created.

(Milubi 1988:65)

And for the black youth to sustain slavery of any type, in order to heed the message of the poet, it is for them to go back to school and get educated. It is only through education where the Blacks can break the chains of bondage, because education is a symbol of enlightenment and protection. Only then can the Black man boldly stand up and look his oppressor in the eye, without blinking and say:

*Bjale ke nako ya lena go ikudubatša,
Lena le beng le re ruile re se diphoofolo,
Emelelang le itirele, hlophologang le itlhapiše,*

*Ga go motho a tlilego lefaseng go direla mongwe,
Dipelo tša lena ga di tshwe mpholo wa Bokgoba.*
(Machaka 1979:55)

(Now is the time for you to arm yourselves,
You who have been owning us though we were
not animals,
Stand up and work for yourselves, and wash
yourselves,
Nobody has come on earth to work for another,
Let your hearts spit out the poison of slavery).

When writing this poem, Machaka did not fear the repercussion of suppression by the then White regime, as most poets in African languages preferred to register their protest in a symbolic way for fear of victimization. Machaka can therefore rightfully be likened to Luthuli, Mandela, Sobukwe and others because to them Mirriam Tlali in her *In Search for Books*, says:

... they write because they are committed,
with them writing is a sacred mission,
a dedication.

(Tlali 1982:64)

Machaka, a committed poet, helps his people to regain their lost dignity, values, norms and land. He is deeply committed. When Machaka wrote this poem, he called a spade a spade. He did this with full knowledge of the strongheadedness of the authorities which drove some authors to exile, while others landed in jail. This, though, did not succeed in destroying their spirit, because they are dedicated protest poets.

In the line

Emelelang le itirele, hlophologang le itlhapiše.
(Machaka 1977:55)
(Stand up and work for yourselves, stand
straight-up and wash yourselves).

the poet sounds a voice of advice to the oppressor. He is awakening him from a stupor. That he must be aware of the fact that apartheid regime has ended. This he does looking the oppressor in the face, revealing in him righteous anger and bitterness.

Machaka's choice of words and imagery has succeeded to help the poet bring out his thoughts. He uses similes like *re be re panwa bjalo ka dikgomo* (we were harnessed like beasts). When one goes through this stanza, it really takes a strong reader not to shed tears. If one could pause for a moment and have a picture of harnessed people before him one would surely break. The strong words that are used in this poem give us a vivid picture of the cruelty of the oppressor. Imagine a person digging trees with hands and ultimately pulling them out with roots and rootlets.

We are thankful that the era has elapsed. What I personally fail to understand is how these oppressors interpreted the Bible. How did they understand the phrase: Do unto others as you would them do unto you? It is said, when the owner of the slave was tired of him he would sell him to another. He actually says: *motho o be a rekwa e se pudi* (a person was bought even though not a goat). It is true that these oppressors deemed the Blackman sub-human indeed.

3.2.3 *Tšhitšhidi* (Therešo 1981:52-53)

At times Black protest poets like Machaka, write some of their protest poems under the cloak of symbolism. This they do in order to avoid falling victims to the authority and regarded as rebels against violent and oppressive regime. They avoid to suffer repression. For the poet to survive victimization, he has to be an expert in playing hide and seek game with his words. The use of symbolism is thus one of the various ways of camouflaging his protest and in turn smuggle his message to his readers because he acknowledges that his people live under cruel, ruthless and oppressive regime.

In the poem *Tšhitšhidi* (Bedbug) Machaka laments:

*Wena Tšhitšhidi o a hlakiša,
O reng o loma batho ba robetše?
Tšea letšepe, tšhitšhidi, o kopele,
O leme mo o tlang go buna gona,
O tlogele go nwa madi a bašomi.*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(You Tšhitšhidi (Bedbug) are a pest,
Why do you bite people when they are asleep?
Take a hoe, Tšhitšhidi (Bedbug), and plough
Sow where you shall reap,
Stop sucking blood of the workers).

The bedbug is a nocturnal pest and it is notorious for its bite and parasitic mode of life. It lives by sucking its victim's blood at night when the victim is asleep. By sucking the victim's blood, it weakens him physically because physiologically, blood is food and oxygen carrier to all parts of the body.

Symbolically in this context, Tšhitšhidi is a person who sells others to the authorities for favours, by talking bad of them while he in turn is being paid for; thus making a living out of it. Such a person is regarded as a spy. He is a person who feigns friendship while seeking information for the authorities. Normally such people deliver the information to the relevant authorities in the night when every normal person is indoors and or asleep, just like the bedbug that bites people when they are asleep. Hence the question to the bedbug.

O reng o loma batho ba robetše?

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Why do you bite people when they are asleep?)

Perhaps the poet also protests against the authorities who capitalise on the poverty of the people and use money which is a strong temptation to them, to aggravate corruption.

On the other hand the poet reprimands the spy (Tšhitšhidi) or even advises him that he must work -

*Tšea letšepe, Tšhitšhidi, o kopele,
O leme mo o tlang go buna gona.*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Take the hoe, bedbug and plough,
Sow where you shall reap).

and stop living by selling other people to the oppressor. He has to advise him to work because he has since realised that he sells people for money. It simply means that if he can get himself a job and earn, there will be no need for him to sell-out. He is advised to reap where he has sown.

A lazy person is socially undesirable and exposes himself to countless dangers. He is compared with someone dashing with closed eyes over the ledge. There is not a time where a sell-out is happy. Even the bitterness of those he sells out creates a subtle emanation of ill luck in his life.

Sucking blood of the workers in this context implies earning money from the apartheid regime by selling out fellow brethren. Such people are being manipulated by others, something that must be avoided in life. This can only be possible in life if we develop honesty towards one another.

Machaka praises enthusiastically labour above all manner of conveniences, for he is convinced that labour conquers all obstacles.

Of course nobody should have any good word for a slothful person. This also makes him lose face in his community. It is also a degradation of Tshitshidi forebears. Surely honest labour bears a lovely face.

Evil-doers are active at night when they are not seen by other people. The lines

*Tshitshidi, o reng o hloka boroko?
Nka o penapena batho ba robetše?*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Bedbug, why are you sleepless?
Why are you so active while people are asleep?)

explains to us that evil doers are more active in the dark. Even the Bible tells us that bad deeds are deeds of the devil in darkness.

As one goes through this poem one becomes aware of the tone of bitterness that pervades it. The poet says

*Tšhitšhidi, taba ye ke mohlolo,
Nka se pepule bana ka go šutelela,
Nka se kobje ke wena ka lapeng,
Tseba bogale bjaka ke bjo bokima,
Noga ga e latwe moleteng wa yona.*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Bedbug, this is a miracle,
I will not carry my children on my back
and give way for you,
I will not be chased out of the homestead by you,
Know that my bravery is strong,
A snake cannot be challenged in its hole).

One cannot imagine the legitimate owner of the homestead unceremoniously evacuating his home because an illegitimate person wants to occupy it. It is indeed a miracle. That the South African whites forcefully want to possess this country is supported by a letter by General J.C. Smuts to John Merriman in 1906 which unambiguously says

I sympathise profoundly with the native
races of South Africa whose land it was long ago before we
came here to force a policy of dispossession on them.

(Oliver & Atmore, 1981:190)

But the idiomatic expression *Noga ga e latwe moleteng wa yona* (A snake cannot be challenged in its hole) will prove a point one day. Here the poet tries to reveal to the oppressor that South African blacks are going to rebel against being chased out of their motherland; and they assure the enemy that they will definitely not lose their motherland. There is no doubt in the black man's mind that one day they will be liberated.

Still protesting against Tšhitšhidi, the poet says

*Ke nnete ga o nthate, Tšhitšhidi,
Nka e o nthata o be o ka se ntome,
O reng o bješe lehu pelong ya ka?*

*Lona le metše le gana go omelela,
Nna le wena re tla kitimišana.*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Indeed you don't love me, Bedbug,
If you loved me you wouldn't bite me,
Why have you sown death in my heart?
It has germinated it refuses to perish/dry up,
You and me will chase each other).

Though the speaker thinks Tšhitšhidi doesn't love him, I personally think Tšhitšhidi is under severe pressure. He is being manipulated and misused by the powers that be for want of money. He has ultimately become egocentric and has developed a motto of "to each his own".

Unfortunately the one who is being spied upon has developed a sense of murder. It is for the spy to retreat because I think time has come that people should resist. Let there be mutual concern among the black people. The line

O reng o bjetshe lehu pelong ya ka?

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Why have you sown death in my heart?)

is an eye for an eye policy, which should be replaced by sweeter words of reconciliation and our society should be peaceful. This then will be a tool to foster national unity and will serve as a balm to heal the societal wounds of the past.

Machaka's ability to give the reader a vivid picture of what he is talking about makes it effective. He says to Tšhitšhidi - *nka o penapena batho ba robetše?* (Why are you so active while people are asleep?) This act is beautifully captured in the verb *penapena*.

These sell-outs are amply described by Serudu thus

... such people spent a better part of their lives searching for information which can be used to incriminate their fellow-beings. They take no stock of the consequences both to

themselves and to those that they incriminate. They are both moral and spiritual weaklings.

(Serudu 1981:98)

When one studies Machaka's poems, one is struck by the exceptional quality of his poems. This of course is supported by the purity of his language and its effectiveness. Though the language he uses is a dialect of Northern Sotho (Setlokwa) one does not encounter problems in understanding his poetry because his books have glossaries. In his poems he uses everyday language in a special and artistic way.

He is here at one with Scott-James quoting from Wordsworth when he says:

The poet should use the language of men, the language of prose when prose is well written, and that he should aim to keep the reader in the company of flesh and blood.

(Scott-James 1948:206)

Machaka's language usage indeed makes his protest poetry more vivid in description and more penetrating in thought.

Machaka does not have rhyme in his protest poems. Perhaps it is because rhyme, especially end-rhyme is not common in Northern Sotho or rather in African poetry. Rhyme possibilities are more restricted in African languages because of their different syllabic structure which consists mainly of consonant - vowel combination, as compared to languages such as English. Northern Sotho has only seven basic vowels with four variants - a fact that limits the successful usage of rhyme to a considerable extent in comparison with European languages where words may end on almost any consonant or vowel.

For this reason therefore, few authors tried this technique and fewer still succeeded in using it. The majority of poets spoiled their poems by trying to force rhyme in their poems. Those that have used it have shown it in parallelism and linking. The main purpose being to give their poems rhythm. This technique Machaka has used very successfully.

Unlike most poets, in Machaka's protest poems one finds very little well-known formulaic techniques such as parallelism and repetition. He uses catalogue as his main compositional device. This he does in order to communicate oneness with the people. Perhaps their minimal usage here is owing to the fact that the mood of Machaka's protest poems is very serious. He has no time to play around with words. His is to send the message across, the message for awakening his people to the ills that destroy their humanity and dignity.

Stress is also not found in his poems because African languages are not stress languages. What is found mostly in his protest poems is rhythm. It would be better expressed if we were to say that the rhythm in poetry is more constrained while that of prose is freer, because we only have prosodic elements which constitute rhythm. This is used mostly by syllable length. The long syllables in a line of verse act as a beat or pulse, and high tone on a syllable acts as a secondary beat. If it could happen that the high tone and syllable length fall on one and the same syllable, then the beat is much stronger - for instance.

*Banna ba kgapha mahlodi e se bana,
Ba llela mabu a ba thupeditšeng,*

(Machaka 1979:20)

(Men wipe tears like children,
Crying for the land they had worked on),

Rhythm as Heese and Robin Lawton (1978:13) put it, is an effectual movement or "flow" which is a sense of movement created by the writer's use of emphasis and tempo. With this rhythm Machaka expresses his feelings and creates a serious mood in his message.

Though Machaka's protest poetry lacks quite a number of structural pattern devices that are normally used in protest poetry, that does not make his poetry poor.

We do find symbolism in Machaka's protest poetry. In a way, this enriches his work. In his poem *Tshutshidi*, as we have already indicated, *Tshutshidi* symbolises a spy. He tries to redress and or reprimand those that are lazy to work but earn a living by selling out their fellow brethren. In the lines,

*Wena Tšhitšhidi, o a hlakiša,
O reng o loma batho ba robetše?*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(You Bedbug, you are pestering,
Why do you bite people while they are asleep?)

he is trying to personify this parasitic insect to denote a person who lives by earning money through selling out his fellowmen. Like Tšhitšhidi that sucks blood from its victim, so does a spy to his fellowmen.

A brotherly advice to Tšhitšhidi is:

*Tšea letšepe, Tšhitšhidi, o kopele,
O leme moo o tlang go buna gona,*

(Machaka 1981:52)

(Take a hoe, Bedbug, and plough,
And sow where you shall reap),

Tšhitšhidi is an insect that hasn't hands big enough to handle a hoe; let alone to plough with. But in the above lines, Tšhitšhidi is advised to hoe. A hoe is a garden tool that needs to be handled with one's two hands in order for it to function properly. This is evidence enough that the poet here doesn't talk to a bedbug but talks to a normal person, who has both his hands and five senses functioning normally.

3.2.4 *Monang* (Therešo: 1981:37-38)

*Monang, ruri ge nka go swara o tla naba,
Ke tla go thathantšha maoto o a rweleng,
Ke tla go kumula maphego o a kgantšhang,
Le molongwana wa gago ke tla o šilaganya,
Ke ona o lomang bao ba sa go hlorišeng.*

(Machaka 1981:37)

(Mosquito, surely if I could get hold of you,
I would smash your feet,
I would pull out your wings,

Even your mouth I would squash,
It is the one that bites innocent people.)

We find similarity in content between the poem that we have just treated and *Monang*. Both protest about those people who make a living by selling their fellow brethren to the white regime.

What is breath-taking in this poem is the fact that the poet starts by telling us what he will do to *Monang*, the culprit, if he could get hold of him even before he tells us where *Monang* has wronged him. This reveals the anger of the poet, where he even forgets sequence. He is so angry with *Monang*! One can feel the bitter tone in this poem. He should have started by telling us *Monang*'s wrongs before he relates to us how he is going to punish him.

His anger is proved by the strong and harsh verbs used in this stanza; namely, *thathantsha*, *kumula* and *silaganya*. The word *thathantsha*, means to cut into pieces. For the speaker to cut the mosquito's legs into pieces, implies the pieces will never be mended, as the pieces shall be cut very small. While *kumula* means, for an example to pull a plant out of the soil. If one pulls out a plant in that manner, he wants to eradicate it. In the very manner, the poet wants to pull *Monang*'s legs out so that it can never again move.

To *silaganya* means to grind or to crush to very small pieces or to powder between millstones. If something is crushed in that manner, if it's a living being it will never come to life again. All these verbs which reveal anger in the poem, explain the cruel manner in which the poet will punish the spy if he could get hold of him.

When talking of protest poetry Milubi says:

... is an art that speaks to people in terms of their feelings and ideas about the world, an art that validates the positive aspects of their life-style. In other words, one may say that a protest poet is a being who finds himself immersed in an oppressive situation together with the oppressed. Within his

protest lies a vision of a new future ... He discovers for his people a new world within the old.

(Milubi 1988:59)

Yes, what Machaka wishes to do to the sell-out, is exactly what people practically do to those who do not collaborate with the mass. Here we think of the many who have fallen into this trap. Hacking sell-outs to death, as it is Machaka's wish, was the order of the day. It instilled fear, though, in most of them and they stopped the practice in numbers. Those that remained became very few. Indeed, the thinning out of sell-outs made them see a vision of a new future, a new world within the old, which Milubi speaks about in the above quotation.

The second stanza of this poem reads:

*Monang, o reng wena o re hlokiša boroko?
Maotwana a go a goma motho o a sasamelwa,
Maphegwana a gago a no lerole la go loma,
Mmejana wa gago o phuthetše feela bolwetši,
Wena Monang, wena sebobolane, o a tshwenya.*

(Machaka 1981:39)

(Mosquito, why do you make us sleepless?
If your feet touch a person, his body itches,
Your wings have a biting powder,
Your body is covered with ailment,
You mosquito, you the whisper, you are troublesome).

Indeed the mosquito's monotonous music keeps people awake at night. The sound is irritating and annoying, more especially when one thinks that it is not easy to see nor locate a mosquito; especially in the dark. The threat, though, is that when it bites one, then the whole body itches. it is a spit that causes malaria.

This is what happens to a person who is spied. The suffering is unbearable and not easy to cure. The police come to the victim's home at night, searching almost every corner of the house. Definitely, one will not sleep thereafter because they shall have terrorised and tortured everybody in the house. After having left the house, the house is topsyturvy - in real utter confusion.

In most cases they take their victim along for detention and or further torture and interrogation that goes with it. Stealthy arrests in the dead of night was the order of the day.

*Wena Monang, o re tima sebaka sa go lora,
Re katologe, wena sehlola towe sebobolane,
Re tšhiruge, ga o a re thuša go aga dintlo,
E ya sehlageng sa gago o re fe khutšo,
Re katologe, re tlogele mosepetšapolao.*

(Machaka 1981:37)

(You mosquito, you deny us time for dreaming,
Keep away from us, you mumblor,
Keep aloof, you didn't help us built (these) houses,
Go to your nest and leave us in peace,
Keep away, leave us, you killer).

What the poet says here is nothing but words of hatred and disgust, that come from the depth of his heart. Presumably, he is so harsh to the sell-out, thinking that the spy would retreat from his evil deeds, as indeed he is a killer of his own nation.

*Monang, ga o ratege kgorong ya rena batho,
Gobane o re etela ka molomo wa go loma,
Gobane o re hlokiša boroko bja ditoro,
Wena Monang, sebobolane sa go nwa madi,
Wena Monang, seloma-loma mo mafsifsaneng.*

(Machaka 1981:38)

(Mosquito, you are not liked by the people,
Because you visit us with a biting tongue,
Because you cause us dreamless sleep,
You mosquito, mumblor that sucks blood,
You mosquito, the biter in the dark).

It is fitting to conclude this discussion with the words of Sabela Pama - Apla Commander - in chief, interviewed by Sono Temba in *Die Suid Afrikaan No. 46 Nov/Dec*, where he says

- Apartheid cannot be reformed, it has to be destroyed.
- The land must be restored to the African people.

- The armed struggle is the primary one, the external struggle is secondary.
- The African masses are the primary agents of change.
- Whites have to abandon their "settler mentality" and identify with Africans.

(Sono 1993:17)

Of course nobody should have any good word for a slothful person. This also makes him lose face in his community. It is also a degradation of Monang's forebears. Surely, honest labour bears a lovely face.

We do find symbolism in Machaka's protest. In *Monang*, we also come across parallelism in the form of repetition, which is particularly useful to the writers of free verse, because it creates pleasing echoes akin to rhyme, without the restrictions of regular end-rhyme:

*Gobane o re etela ka molomo wa go loma,
Gobane o re hlokiša boroko bja ditoro,
Wena Monang, sebobolane sa go nwa madi,
Wena Monang, seloma-loma mo mafsifsaneng.*

(Machaka 1981:38)

(Because you visit us in a biting tongue,
Because you cause us dreamless sleep,
You Mosquito, mumbler that sucks blood,
You Mosquito, the biter in the dark).

The repetition of the words *gobane* (because) and *Wena Monang* (You Mosquito) in the above stanza does not only stress the feeling but pattern the sounds in the poem and lends emphasis on, and helps unify the poem.

He also uses linking by synonyms, namely,

*Re katologe wena sehlola ...
Re tšhiruge, ga o a re thuša ...*

(Machaka 1981:37)

(Keep away from us, you ill omen ...
Keep aloof, you didn't help us ...).

which also like repetition gives continuity and enhances the seriousness and quality of the poem.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher tried to show that the black man is not quiet about the white man's behaviour towards him. It is just unfortunate that he is powerless.

This is managed because of the laudable contribution made by Machaka. He has successfully opened the readers' eyes; through the effective use of language.

It is also noted that the forerunner of protest poetry in Northern Sotho is Mamogobo. Machaka has succeeded in pointing out the injustices in social, economic and political situations, because like all the writers, he has a duty to society. This he acquired successfully through the effective control and manipulation of his basic tools, which is language. He has managed to drive the message home. It also became clear that Machaka does not only present his protest overtly but also covertly through the use of symbolism as indicated in the last two poems, *Tshitshidi* and *Monang*.

CHAPTER 4

4. ELEGY

4.1 Introduction

The elegy belongs to the lyric class. Originally in Greek, it was a song of lamentation. Writing on the theme of death, Lenake says:

Death has plagued man throughout the ages and ever since man pursued the subject relentlessly. Poets of all nations have also reflected on the mystery of this phenomenon.

(Lenake 1984:60)

Northern Sotho poetry has a large number of elegies and almost all of them have been written successfully. As one reads the elegies, one is affected by two things; namely, the importance of the departed and the sorrow of the poet. One also observes that dying brings sorrow and pain to the bereaved families or tribe. It also brings emotional strain made worse by unpreparedness for the event, because at times a person dies prematurely and his demise appears all the more shocking. There is in the elegies therefore, a bewilderment and at times, an anger, that a human being's life does not run the course apparently indicated by nature. Machaka's elegies are personal because he expresses his own feelings about the deaths of his own people. His elegies, as it will be noticed, are concrete examples of the effect of death - as in death we see the hand of the Creator at work.

In defining the term elegy Martin Gray says:

A poem of lamentation, concentrating on the death of a single person ... The death celebrated may be that of a public figure rather than a personal friend. (Martin Gray 1984:71)

A personal elegy is essentially a lamentation for an individual, whose attributes one might expect to be sung at some length.

Elegy is therefore specifically about what is missing and also about what is more certainly known to have been formerly possessed. What is missing may be a particular person or a particular quality of life or it may be both. The mourning song or poem may thus be a complaint in which the poet bewails his bereavement.

In elegies poets usually record some physical features, the personality and the deeds of that person. Elaborating on this phenomenon, Finnegan asserts,

... After death the poems would remain as an ornament to his life, an inspiration and glory to his friends and followers, and a worthy commemoration to keep his name alive as one of the ancestors. People will die and their praises will remain. It is these that will be left to mourn for them in their deserted homes.

(Finnegan 1976:142).

Elegiac poetry is common among Africans. In most cases though, it cannot be distinct from love poetry since it is a cry by someone who has lost a loved one.

Traditionally, this genre, in the form of poem or a dirge was performed orally by women at a funeral. At times the bereaved family would hire professional mourners to come and wail at a funeral of a departed family member. This was done in order to add an extra embellishment to the usual laments. According to Finnegan (1976) this practice is done by the Yoruba. She further says:

On these occasions women are the foremost singers ... The fact that these often involve wailing, sobbing and weeping makes them particularly suitable for women - for in Africa as elsewhere such activities are considered typically female.

(Finnegan 1976:148)

Traditionally, dirges were meant for public figures like kings, hunters and brave warriors. In the case of a dead expert hunter, special dirges are sung at his funeral by fellow hunters who come to attend the funeral rite because burials of such figures are ceremonial. In this case therefore, a special elegy is composed, especially for him and relates to him alone. A praise poem is also recited and the deceased is called by his praise name and his great deeds are lauded.

The practice by Africans befits Machaka's elegy because in *Mehlodi* Kgarahara is praised as follows:

... *ngwedi o phadimileng le hlabile.*
... *Kgoši ya go tuka lethabo.*
... *Kgoši ya go akaretša ditšhiwana.* (Machaka 1981:5)

(... Moon that shone during broad daylight.
... the King who blazed with happiness
... the King who protects orphans.)

We can rightfully say mourners who attended the funeral of a great man, did not come to mourn his death but to praise him.

Another vivid example to prove that traditionally upon the death of a great person like a King or a brave warrior, at the burial rites ceremony of such figures, elegiac poems, praises and ululation predominate, is found in L.H. Maduane's manuscript:

Maroeshe

1. *Ke Maroeshe Mothata:*
2. *Ke Seemedi sa Maroka,*
3. *Maroeshe Selwaletau gare ga megwana;*
4. *Tlou ya re ke marapo mathata*
5. *Mothata Maroeshe a e hlaba ka diloka,*
6. *Sebatakgolo sa šhlankgana;*
7. *Mothata kotse a sega leoma,*
8. *Leomelaruri sebokamatsolo a bašemanyana!*
9. *Mokone, Bakone o ba alametše tšatšing;*
10. *Mokone, Bakone o ba phemele magolong;*
11. *Boroko Ngwaketse.* (Maduane 1990:93-94)

1. (He is Maroeshe Mothata
2. He is Moraka's representative
3. Maroeshe the fighter with a lion in the bush
4. Elephant said I am strong
5. Mothata Maroeshe pierced it with weapons
6. The great animal fell down
7. Spears are unable to pierce Mothata
8. To Mothata weapons are ineffective
9. Mokone the Bakone he defended in broad daylight
10. Mokone, the Bakone he protected

11. Rest in peace Ngwaketse!)

When analysing the above elegiac poem, L.H. Maduane says **Mothata** is derived from *thatafala* which expresses sturdiness; that is, *Maroeshe* is soldiership. *Tlou* implies an enemy and *megwane* brings forth the idea of the battlefield. *Diloka*, figuratively means weapons. *Šihlankgana* is anomatopoeia denoting the falling of a fearsome enemy. *Leoma* is derived from *go oma* and metaphorically it means impenetrable. *Matsolo* are arrows, but *matsolo a bašimanyana* implies ineffective weapons of the novice. *Alamela tšatšing* expresses defence which is similar to *phemela magolong* which also brings forth the idea of protection and ambassadorship. Lines 9 and 10 are synonymous repetition. *Boroko* means rest in peace.

When comparing the traditional elegiac poetry with that of Machaka, one finds that he too writes about individual deaths of prominent people like kings. He only differs from traditional genres in the sense that he also writes about deaths of groups of people caused by mine and train accidents. We also find in Machaka, a poem which has death as its theme, without being connected with actual death or mourning. It reads thus:

*Dithupa tša lefase di ka hlora modumedi,
Le mehlwa ya mohlaba e ka mo totobetša;
Pula le ge e ka gana go fologa marung,
Tšeo motho o di amogetše ka bohlokohloko,
O paletšwe ke go lebelela Lehu mahlong.*

(Machaka 1981:21)

(Troubles on earth can persecute a believer,
Even problems on earth can oppress him;
Even if rain cannot fall from the clouds,
All these, man has accepted painfully,
He is unable to look Death in the face.)

In this stanza, Machaka speaks about the enumerable problems man encounters on earth. It does not matter how severe or painful they are; man has learned to accept them. Man accepts them knowing very well that they are but a temporary measure. He always hopes that if this year has no rain definitely there will be abundance of it the year that follows. Man leaves on hope.

But man is unable to accept the pain brought about by death. Death as portrayed by Machaka, is a powerful and merciless phenomenon. Man is afraid of death. Man is not in a position to face death. This is because death is a threat to life. Death looms above every man. It is invincible and man is helplessly exposed to it. Man is afraid of death because he cannot rewind life; because he passes through this world but once.

There are so many theories about life after death. Christians believe in the after life. According to Smith Eric

The parting soul is not a totally 'dying soul'; yet its voice cries backwards to life and by contrast the bodies in the narrow cells are laid there forever ... The cycle of nature points to life coming forth out of death.

(Smith Eric, 1977:53)

One day, death will therefore ultimately die. It is quite clear that Machaka's attitude towards death is both traditional and Christian. He shares in the fear of, and despair at death but he finds consolation in the Christian belief that in the end death will come to an end. He therefore accepts death as a necessary end, with the Christian taught,

Death, where is thy Sting,
Grave, where thy victory?

(1 Corinthians 15:55)

In other words, death has been seen as the "imperishable change that renovates the world". The Bible seems to agree with the above quotation. This idea is expressed by St. Paul:

It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ...

(1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

It is believed the dead will rise with Christ on his second coming. To Christians therefore, death is a stepping stone to the kingdom of God. To a Christian, his consolation is that everyday and night brings him nearer to the union of souls in life hereafter.

Whereas those who have the African traditional belief, to them death is a bridge that joins the dead with their ancestors. They believe that when one dies, his soul, intellect, personality and will-power form a permanent combination with his spirit and finally departs from his physical body as ancestral spirit. He then goes to the spirit world which is below the ground and like the living society, also organised according to kinship groups.

This belief does not affect the Northern Sotho people only. It is found among all the people in Africa. Agawu V. Kofi has this to say about the Akpafu of South Eastern Ghana about their public mourning:

The philosophic significance of death in Akpafu culture is twofold. First - it marks the completion of the earthly cycle of existence, ... Second it opens the door to a higher spiritual realm in which the deceased as an ancestor, takes his place alongside the lesser gods and the Supreme Being in the higher reaches of the hierarchy of existence.

(Agawu 1988:75)

In the realm of the Supernatural, the ancestor becomes energised with mystical powers which enable him to influence his living descendants and their natural environment in almost any conceivable way. As an intelligent being with his own desires, the ancestor takes the necessary actions to assist or to discipline his relatives thereby ensuring an orderly society. From their side the living people accept responsibilities to honour and worship their ancestral spirits in order to enjoy their goodwill. A highly functional relationship therefore exists between the living and the dead. The spirits of the dead Kings are regarded as being extremely powerful as they can influence the entire nation.

Truly speaking, no one is sure of what happens after death. Both groups do have a point. Even the Apostle Paul in First Corinthians: 13:12 is of the same idea:

For now we see in the mirror dimly, but then face to face.
Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I
have been fully understood.

(I Corinthians 13:12)

We are all going to know the truth the day we are face to face with it. To Machaka, death knows no bounds:

*Letsha le ka tlala meetse a rulela gohle,
Ge re rata a fula re ka a bulela menyako,
Ge re sa rate ra a thibela go elela,
Lehu ke selo seo se paletšego go thibelwa,
Le tsena mo go sa tsenegeng la tšea moya.*

(Machaka 1981:21)

(A lake can be brimful of water,
If we like we can make way for it to go out,
If we don't we can stop its flow,
Death one cannot stop,
It enters places which are impenetrable
and take one's soul)

As human beings we know all parts of the body and we can actually tell where each part is situated. What we cannot tell is where one's soul is situated. What is known to man is that for one to be alive one inhales oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide. But death knows where man's soul is situated because the poet says:

Le tsena mo go sa tsenegeng la tšea moya.

(Machaka 1981:21)

(It enters where it is impenetrable and takes the soul).

Most poets like to personify death. This is evidenced in the preceding statement where death enters impenetrable places and takes the soul. He speaks of death as if it is a person, who is in a position to walk and has hands to take.

Invisible as it is, many poets, Machaka included, present it as a concrete image.

4.2 THE ELEGIES OF MACHAKA

4.2.1 *Lehu la Kgoši Kgarahara Machaka* (Naledi 1981:5-10)

An important characteristic of Machaka's elegies is the "national" nature thereof. The main concern is the relationship between the "we" (the nation) and the deceased. The

narrator's personal loss or passion is subordinate to that of the loss of the people. This is amply depicted in

*Bogale bja lerumo la Botlokwa le kukubane,
Mpheng wa lerumo la Botlokwa o robegile,
Joo! Joo! re lahlegetšwe ke mollo - tukutuku!
E ile kgoši ya rena, dinoka di re tlaletše,*

(Machaka 1981:5)

(The sharp-blade of **Botlokwa's** assegai is blunt,
The handle of the **Botlokwa's** assegai is broken,
Joo! Joo! we have lost a burning fire!
Gone is our King, we are stranded),

We said earlier on that together with the dirge rendered upon the death of a prominent leader, there are praises that are showered on the dead. On praising the departed Kgoši Kgarahara, the poet calls him *bogale bja lerumo*, (the sharp-blade of the assegai); *mpheng wa lerumo* (the handle of the assegai) and *mollo tukutuku* (the burning fire). If Kgoši is likened to the sharp blade of an assegai or the handle thereof, it shows that Kgarahara was a prominent figure among his tribe. That is why his absence is felt. The heart of the whole tribe therefore is stirred by his death. The lament is heard everywhere; on the wharf, in the villages, far and wide. One feels the sad resigned tone of the whole tribe.

As Kgoši is being praised, his good deeds are also lauded:

*... thetemotse ya gagešo ga Machaka,
... kgoši ya go fefera matshwenyego.
... Setšaba sa selete sa bagale.
... tshega ya thatano.
... Kgoši ya khutšo.
... leru le le tletšeng lerato.
... kgoši seroba mpherefere,
... moepedi wa tshele mabung.
... kgoši segotša mollo wa kwešišo.
... wena letata la go hlola šobane.
... wena seedi, wena mothekga-khutšo.
... wena nkgo ya go tima lenyora.
... wena monola wa selete sa bagale.
... mosamelo wa thuto le tumelo.
... thomo ya go tima ledimo le foka.*

(Machaka 1981:6)

(... fence of my village ga-Machaka,
 ... king that sifts troubles,
 ... the pit of the heroes.
 ... sample of love.
 ... king of peace.
 ... cloud full of love.
 ... king the breaker of trouble,
 ... burrier of complaints underground.
 ... the king who kindles the fire of understanding.
 ... you the kaross that overpowers cold.
 ... you the light, you supporter of peace.
 ... you the claypot that quenches thirst.
 ... you the moisture of a village of heroes.
 ... pillow of education and faith.
 ... The hero who stops the raging storm.)

We do find a Christian influence in Machaka's elegies. This is evidenced in the following lines:

*Wena Jehofa o tla re fa gape ngwedi o mongwe.
 Wena Jehofa o tla re agela gape lebotoboto.
 Jehofa o tla neša pula ya forohla mahlodi,
 Modimo, o se re katologe!
 Tšeang dipelo tša lena le lahleleng Moreneng,
 Gobane ke Yena tsela, ke Yena modiša o botho,
 Ba rile Modimo se a tšereng re ka se mo sole.
 Modimo ke yo botho, pabalelo ya Gagwe ga e pšhe,
 Kgarahara ga a hwa, o phela badimong le Modimo.*
 (Machaka 1981:6)

(You Jehovah, you will give us another moon.
 You Jehovah, you will build us another strong wall.
 Jehovah you will let rain fall to wipe our tears,
 God don't be far from us!
 Take your hearts to the Lord,
 He is the way, He is the Good Shepherd,
 What God takes we shall not blame.
 God is kind, His protection is for ever ...
 Kgarahara is not dead, he lives with the gods and God.)

This influence the poet got at school, where he was converted. Serudu maintains:

It would seem therefore that in discussing a literary work, one has to take into account the author's historical background.

That is, one must have a knowledge of his life, as well as that of the period during which he wrote his works.

(Serudu 1987:38)

We are therefore not surprised by the juxtaposition of the Christian faith and ancestral worship in the poet's elegies. It is an inherent feature in the spirit of Africans. About this idea Egudu says

Africans hold this belief about the dead and death not because they want by design to be what the White men are not, but because that belief is part of their culture handed down to them from time immemorial.

(Egudu 1978:34)

The poet also, like all Africans did not escape this trap. He dwells on the idea that the dead are with the gods. He says to us:

Kgoši Kgarahara ga a hwa, o iketše badimong.

.....
Kgarahara ga a hwa, o phela badimong le Modimo.

.....
Sepela gabotse, o se re lebale re mo tseleng.

(Machaka 1981:6)

(King Kgarahara is not dead, he has gone to the gods.

.....
Kgarahara is not dead, he **lives** with the gods and God.

.....
Go well, don't forget us, we are on the way).

As we know, we are all in a queue, each one of us waiting his turn. The only problem is, we do not know before who or after whom is our turn. But we are all going to pass through this world by dying. Hence the poet's statement

Sepela botse, o se re lebale re mo tseleng.

(Machaka 1981:7)

(Go well, don't forget us, we are on the way).

According to how Machaka puts it, Kgarahara is not dead, he has just crossed over to the land of the ancestral spirits. To him the parted soul is not a totally dead soul.

Traditionally a King is a leader and father to his tribe. He is also a fortress of his tribe. This is supported by the statements

Mahlodi a Botlokwa a tletše noka!
Leboto la setšhaba sa Botlokwa le kgeregile,
Naase ngwedi wa Dianankwe o diketše Bodikela,
(Machaka 1981:5)

Botlokwa tears have filled the river!
The wall of the Batlokwa tribe has fallen,
Today the moon of the tiger venerators has set in the West),

Kgoši Kgarahara's death left the Batlokwa in real bereavement and despair. Though the poet over-emphasized the Batlokwa tears that filled the river - he was emphasizing the depth of their sorrow.

Normally people lean against something for support. At times a wall is built around a homestead to serve as a windbreak. If such a wall falls, all that it sheltered or supported will be exposed to all types of dangers. That is how the poet sees his king to his people.

Light is provided by the sun during the day and by the moon at night. Nights when the moon does not shine, are always dark. It is also not safe to walk around in darkness. One may fall into a donga unawares. Robbers and murderers are also fond of performing their evil deeds in the darkness. To Batlokwa tribe, the death of king Kgarahara is likened to the moon that has set in the West. His death leaves them in darkness and exposed to danger.

There is a Northern Sotho proverb which goes - *monna ke nku o llela teng!* (A man is a sheep, he cries silently), which simply means, we do not expect a man to shed tears openly, even under taxing circumstances. People are used to seeing women crying openly, not men. A man is known to be strong in character. He never breaks in public. But today we are surprised to come across men sobbing.

*Kgoši Kgarahara o ile, ra bona meetse a senna,
Re a bona o a lla Mabeba, homola Nkwe e kgolo.
Re a bona o a lla Mosima, homola Nkwe e kgolo.*

(Machaka 1981:5)

(When King Kgarahara died, we saw men's tears,
We see you are crying Mabeba, be comforted the big Tiger.
We see you are crying Mosima, be comforted the big Tiger).

The two names mentioned in the preceding excerpt are not names of ordinary men among the Batlokwa tribe. They are names of counsellors in the Batlokwa kraal. Hence they are termed - *Nkwe e kgolo* (the big Tiger). It must be borne in mind that the Batlokwa tribe have Nkwe (Tiger) as their totem. For the counsellors to cry tears like women or children denotes that something intolerable and serious has happened. Indeed, the death of a king means that the responsibility of controlling and ruling the tribe has now rested on their shoulders. It further means that they may succeed or they may fail to lead the tribe. This is therefore, their great concern. They are frightened because during the reign of Kgoši Kgarahara there was turmoil among the tribe. This is evidenced by the lines

*Sepela botse, thomo ya go tima ledimo le foka.
Sepela botse, Kgoši ya go fefera matshwenyego.*

(Machaka 1981:10)

(Go well, the king who quells the raging storm.
Go well, the king who sifts troubles).

In the following stanza, the poet assigns duties of responsibility to the counsellors. He says to them

*Emelela o phumule mahlodi a setšhaba Mabeba,
Ema o fe Batlokwa tshepo ba tlaletšwe, Mosima,
Emelela o fe thari ya Dinkwe seedi Manthata,
Hlophologa o age kgoro ya Botlokwa Ramokgopa,*

(Machaka 1981:5)

(Stand up and wipe the tribe's tears Mabeba,
Stand and give Batlokwa hope, they are in trouble Mosima,

Stand up and give Dinkwe nation light Manthata,
Stand straight and build Botlokwa courtyard Ramokgopa),

These counsellors are given these duties to perform because they are the legitimate people to perform them, in the absence of the king.

In this stanza the word *emelela* (stand up) is an instruction which commands Mabeba to do something. He is to do without questioning. Mabeba must console the tribe because he is the most senior counsellor of the Batlokwa nation. He must comfort the mourning nation. He must also heal the wounds of the nation that have been caused by the death of their king. The healing must be felt to be more than mere passing of grief into indifference and forgetfulness. He has therefore to console them that they ultimately accept and adjust.

Mosima is also given a mammoth task. He must give the tribe hope. He must assure them that beyond this dark tunnel, there is light. He must make them aware and convince them of the afterlife. Tell them that the dead rest alike in the bosom of God, and that death is likened to the falling of dead tree leaves which fertilise the land to produce a new cycle of vegetation. By so saying, the nation will realise that their king is not dead but he is just like dead tree leaves which fertilise the land. By so doing it produces a new cycle of life.

Manthata is also instructed to stand up and show light to the tribe. The word *light* has two connotations. In the first instance, light may mean education. Manthata is being instructed to lead the tribe in education. He must take up where Kgoši Kgarahara has left off, because according to the poem, Kgarahara built schools for the nation. He must see to it that Batlokwa children attend school.

In the second instance, light that is spoken of here, may mean Christianity. Traditionally, the Batlokwa tribe were worshipping ancestors. It is during the reign of Kgarahara that Christianity was introduced. Kgarahara gave the ministers of religion permission to spread the word of God among his people. This responsibility is given to Manthata.

Ramokgopa is instructed to rebuild the Batlokwa nation. He is warned:

Ge o ka se thekge Batlokwa le wena o lobile,
(Machaka 1981:5)

(If you do not support Batlokwa, you will also be the loser).

He must therefore stand up courageously and rebuild the Batlokwa nation. From this stanza, the poet is trying to say to the counsellors that even though the king has departed, they must not mourn for ever - life must continue.

Kgarahara was a great man. This is evidenced by the happenings upon his death. The poet says,

Mollo wa Botlokwa ga o sa tuka!
Dinoka tša Botlokwa di kwele tša ema go ela,
Tša khutša gatee tša llela noka ya khutšo,
Ga llelwa ke rena feela, le diphoofolo di letše,
E šita le meetse a Botlokwa a rwala tlalelo, ...
(Machaka 1981:9)

(Botlokwa's fire does no longer burn!
Botlokwa's rivers heard this and stopped flowing,
They stopped for a moment and mourned for the river of
peace,
Not only did people mourn for him, but animals as well,
Botlokwa's waters too, got confused,)

Everything came to a standstill upon hearing the death of Kgoši Kgarahara. The poet brought this idea to emphasize that when a great man dies, everything pauses for a while to mourn. Indeed, everything in the universe paused to mourn the departure of Kgoši Kgarahara. This practice is common. It will be remembered that even when Jesus died, the whole universe became dark.

Even in the olden days, poets wrote elegies where nature mourned the death of heroes. This is depicted in Ramaila (1935:7) when Thaba-nthso mourned for the Kopa tribe, that was brutally slain in 1864, May 10 by the Swazi regiment on request by the Whites. The Kopa tribe, the story goes, was stealing the White man's cattle and they in turn requested the Swazis to come to their rescue. The Swazis killed the Kopas in a very cruel manner. It is said that, many who saw this cruel battle are unable to relate it without holding their

tears. Ramaila consoles the mourning Thaba-nthso thus:

Sello sa Thaba-nthso

*Thaba-nthso, 'na O re hlomola
Dipelo ba re Xo bônang;
Xa O sa etša mohla wola
O lliša ba ba Xo tsebang*

*O byalo ka mohloloxadi
Mo mašelang a fifetšeng;
U ituletše xar'a madi.
Tlang hlê 'me Le mo homotšeng.*

*U xanêlang xê O homotšwa
Thaba-nthso, joo, O xanêlang? -
A O re bana ba ka buša
Ba dirwa xapê ba phelang?*

*Morena Jesu a le noši
A ka homotša thaba yé;
A ka kxalema le mekxoši
Ka Ebangedi naxeng yé;*

(Ramaila 1935:7)

The Lament of Thaba-nthso

(Thaba-nthso you break
Our hearts we who know you;
You are not like the other time
You make those who know you cry.

You are like a widow
In mourning clothes;
You are seated in blood.
Please come and comfort her.

Why do you refuse to be comforted
Thaba-nthso, why do you refuse?
Do you think the children
Can be brought back to life again?

Only Jesus alone
Can comfort this mountain;
He can reprimand the mourning cry
By the Gospel in this country).

In this poem, it seems difficult for Thaba-nthso to believe that those dead people have really departed this life. The idea of wavering between belief and disbelief is contained in the lines

*A O re bana ba ka buša
Ba dirwa xape ba phelang?*

(Ramaila 1935:7)

(Do you think the children
Can be brought back to life again?)

If Thaba-nthso were a person, we would say his state of mind, as the bereaved, is portrayed in a serious and natural manner. This goes straight into the heart because it is so real.

Like Thaba-nthso, the hearts of the whole Kopa nation are stirred. The pain caused by this incident has not yet died away among the Kopa people.

Besides the elegies that we find in the traditional poems, there are dirges that emerge in the form of choral and hymnal songs, as hymns are also regarded as creative work like any other. Let us take an example of hymn 170 in *Lifela tsa Sione* (1991:145). The last stanza reads;

*Motse oo o holimo, - O kenoa ka tiisetso;
Ke motse oa linatla - Tse o hapang ka maatla.*

(Lifela tsa Sione 1991:145)

(That land is above, - It is entered through perseverance;
It is the land of heroes - Who enter it through strength.)

In this stanza, the message is a lament and at the same time the dead are being lauded as heroes. This is a hymn that is often sung at funeral services.

Like the Christian burial, during the traditional burial ceremony rites, elegiac poems or songs were performed. These dirges were sung by females while the corpse lay in state.

It is unfortunate that some of the elderly informants I interviewed knew that elegiac dirges existed but they could not remember a single traditional dirge or lament. All they could remember is that these dirges once existed. They seem to have disappeared, and their place taken by funeral hymns.

This is the fruit of gradual acculturation process which is going on among the black people. Today it is not uncommon to attend a vigil in a village where Christian hymns are sung throughout the night.

Traditionally death was shrouded in mystery and secrecy. The dead were also buried in secret; hence the disappearance of all the treasure pertaining to traditional burial rites.

The introduction of Christianity by the missionaries also added salt to an injury. Christian converts frowned upon traditional customs and there was thus a break with the burial ceremony rite. It ended up dying out and so are the few isolated old people who knew about it. Unfortunately all these happened even before it was put to record. It has as such virtually become a thing of the past and no longer exercises any influence on the cultural lives of the people.

4.2.2 *Botlokwa bo Faletše (Naledi 1981:44-47)*

It is normally said that death is like a foe who must be looked into the face and that one should not lose courage when fighting death. At times it is easy to say but very difficult when faced with reality.

At times the manner in which death comes cannot be encountered face to face. The type of death that befell the Batlokwa nation is indeed unbearable. Accidental death where eighteen Batlokwa men died when a bus in which they were travelling collided with a train. This happened in 1966 at Potgietersrus. They were on their way from Botlokwa, having attended the inaugural ceremony of their King. They were going back to Johannesburg - which was their place of work.

Though the poet consoles the Batlokwa in faith, surely it is a testing time. He says to the nation:

*Sello sa Batlokwa se tla homotšwa ke mang?
Mahlodi a lete sa gešo a tla phumulwa ke mang?
Masea a lobileng a tla seletwa ke mang?
Modimo o tseba mo re tšwang le mo re yang,
Ke Yena fela a tla beang Batlokwa boruthong,
Ke Yena kholofelo ya rena teng ga mahlomola.*

(Machaka 1981:47)

(Who will stop the cry of the Batlokwa?
Who will wipe off tears of my village?
Kids who have lost parents, who will support them?
God knows where we come from and where we're going
He is the only one who will comfort the Batlokwa
He is our only hope amidst problems).

In this lament, the poet is confused and frustrated. Indeed, in such a tragedy, the Batlokwa nation suffered a great loss. This loss has doomed any hope for the Batlokwa nation, especially when one thinks that the victims were all still very fit. The tribe had cause to mourn for those fallen men because they were supporting their families financially. On that cursed day, the heavens wept with the Batlokwa nation.

One finds it difficult to console the concerned families. Especially when one thinks of the meagre salaries that the poor victims were earning, being the only income for their families and henceforth it will be no more. Machaka is right when he turns to God under these taxing conditions. He does not take the problem to the ancestors as usual, but he requests the Lord God to be the Batlokwa's comforter. It is a consolation to the poet that there is a supreme power which will rescue them because He is our hope.

Machaka's elegies in keeping with African tradition are full of praise. However, we found this tendency more pronounced in Machaka. In this poem, he praises these fallen heroes:

*Lena le ileng botho bja lena bo ikepetše;
Bjona bo sobeletše pelong tša leratorato,
Batlokwa ba le hlologela ka dipelo tša therešo,
Ga go yo a sa ngwadiwang ka lenthe la lerato;
Robalang botse, Batlokwa, le re šüle mahlomoleng,
Robalang botse, madi a Botlokwa, madi a bohlokwa.*

(Machaka 1981:47)

(You who are gone, your kindness we will keep;
It has penetrated into loving hearts,
Batlokwa sincerely miss you,
Everyone of you is dearly remembered;
Rest well, Batlokwa, you left us in destitute;
Rest well, Botlokwa blood, valuable blood.)

This is a sign of acceptance of what has happened. The poet on behalf of the nation, thanks God for having given them the departed people. They loved them. They will always be remembered, not only by their next of kin but by the entire nation, because they all formed part of the Batlokwa nation.

The poet hands the souls of the departed over to the gods. Traditionally, the Blacks do believe that on such occasions the gods are happy. There is ululating when the dead person arrives at the courtyard of the ancestors because he has come to increase them in number. This is proved by the words

*Lena badimo ba Diaparankwe, bana ba lena šeba,
Ba amogeleng ba tlile lapeng la komakoma,
Ba lletšeng mekgolokwane ba tlile go le oketša,
Ba hlapišeng marole a mono faseng la ditshele,
Le re phošeditše fela ka go tšea ka lephakhuphaku.
Nkabe le ba topele ka go latelana ka mengwaga.*

(Machaka 1981:46)

(You Batlokwa ancestors, here are your children,
Welcome them, they have come home,
Ululate for they have come to increase your numbers,
Cleanse them of the earthly dust,
You wronged us by taking them too soon.
You should have taken them according to their chronological
ages).

Indeed, they need to be cleansed because they have been toiling and sweating. They are full of dust, not only earthly dust but of the dusty road of their journey as well. They have fought a good fight and have won. What is left of them is a good rest.

In concluding the stanza, the poet accepts their departure. I presume it is because he knows that we are all not of this world. What worries him is the manner of departure

they (the gods) took a good number all at once instead of taking them one by one and more still, he expected the gods to take them away individually according to their ages.

Machaka likens the blood on the scene of the accident with rain. Here the poet has successfully presented a dramatic situation of death and mourning.

*Pula ya madi e nele marega faseng la Matebele,
Fela marothodi a falalela Botlokwa ga Mmamelodi;
Ona a thonkg a mahlodi a batho le diphoofole,
Ona a thapiša mabu a tsenelela le maswikeng,
Malapeng a bahwana a šia feela matleretlere,
Botlokwa hunagana o hunamele mo Moreneng.*
(Machaka 1981:45)

(Bloody rain has fallen in winter at Matebele's place,
But the drops fell at Botlokwa of Mmamelodi;
It hurt the tears of people and animals;
It in turn wet the ground and stones,
In the widow's homestead, it left misery,
Botlokwa kneel and pray the Lord).

The scene of this accident is clearly depicted. One can even visualise the representatives of the families, scouring the shattered bus for bits of human flesh ground and blasted apart by the merciless train. This was done in order to give all the victims a proper funeral. Obviously, they were crushed beyond recognition.

In this accident, not only did the people mourn bitterly, but also mother nature was touched. It may sound exaggerated when the poet speaks of tears -

Ona a thapiša mabu a tsenelela le maswikeng.
(Machaka 1981:45)

(They (tears) soaked the soil and penetrated rocks).

This is merely an emphasis to show the severity of the accident. Surely, the lament was unbearable, more if one thinks that these people were all Batlokwa and were therefore related.

There is seldom good, if any, that death does. In most cases, more harm than good is done by death. When we think of the orphans that this accident produced, the helpless and workless widows who were solely dependant on the dead; the families that the young menfolk were supporting, one is unable to hold back one's tears. All of them, their future is doomed. The poet says

Malapeng a bahwana a šia feela matleretlere.
(Machaka 1981:45)

(In the widow's homestead, it left misery).

We said earlier that the Batlokwa are related. This means that this accident affected all the Batlokwa either by blood or marriage. This is proved by the stanza

*Ngwana wa bomma o ile, ke tla šala le mang?
Thaka ya ka e ile ka šitwa go kgoka pelo senna,
O ile mo tlala le lenyora di sa tsebjeng,
Homola Mpheuwana'a Tšhaka, o holofele Johofa,
Mo Kgoboko a ileng, le rena re tla mo hwetša,
Le wena Morwedi'a Ramoroka, phumola meokgo.*
(Machaka 1981:44)

(My mother's child is gone, with whom will I remain?
My peer is gone I cannot withhold myself,
He has gone where hunger and thirst are unknown,
Be comforted Mpheuwana of Tšhaka and trust in the Lord,
Where Kgoboko has gone we will find him,
And you Ramoroka's daughter, wipe off the tears).

In the preceding stanza, the poet uses very strong and heartbreaking words. He speaks of those departed having left us unexpectedly. They left behind problems to those remaining behind especially the children and wives who were solely dependent on them. The children who are now orphans have nobody to support them financially.

4.2.3 *Sello sa Coalbrook* (Naledi 1981:106-107)

We stated earlier that Machaka's elegies relate deaths of groups of people. In this poem, he laments for four hundred people who died in the Coalbrook coal mine in 1960. This tragedy will never be forgotten by the victims' next of kin and the world at large. In this elegy we do find some protest because the poet speaks of

*Mokoti wa Coalbrook o lle ditšhabatšhaba,
O phurile thari ye e sa tsebeng dibalabala,
E dulang le mo go hlabahlabang ya sega.*

(Machaka 1981:106)

(Coalbrook mine ate multitudes,
It chewed people who cannot complain,
Who sit on pricking places and still laugh).

This complaint is typical of a wailing African. As he mourns the death of the departed, he has the tendency of complaining in this style.

Death is very cruel. It shuts and crushes all man's plans. The poet here talks of death having crushed the children of Africa. Children of Africa who seldom complain. They accepted almost anything that came their way. I have a belief that even those poor victims' next of kin got very little insurance compensation if ever they got it, because the South African whites then, had a tendency of taking advantage of ignorance of the black man.

One main disheartening fact about this tragedy is because their grave will never be known by man. This is evidenced by the poet when he asserts;

*Ke Modimo yo A tsebang mo A ba beileng,
Ge e le rena batho ba nama yeo ke mohlolo,
Coalbrook ke yeo e rwešitše MaAfrika boso.*

(Machaka 1981:106)

(Only God alone knows where they are,
To us people, it's a miracle,
Coalbrook made Africans wear black).

The wise experienced rescuers tried to search for the dead underground but they failed. This aggravated the pain. All the four hundred men are buried in one deep big grave, which was dug for many years by the miners themselves. Indeed Africa mourned for its beloved and the faithful. Nobody will ever point at their grave because,

... mo Modimo a ba beileng ga go tsebje.

(Machaka 1981:106)

(... where God has put them is not known).

The poet's presentation of this poem, opens the reader's eye of the mind to see the pain that Africa endures. This is well depicted in the following stanza:

*Lebelela Afrika e apere mahlodi a lehu,
Gobane Coalbrook e ba ubutše mekokotilelo,
E ba robile le matsogo a go kopela megola;
E re robile Coalbrook, re šitwa go sepela.*

(Machaka 1981:106)

(Look Africa has worn tears of death,
Because Coalbrook has snatched from them their walking
sticks,
It has broken their hoeing hands;
It has broken us Coalbrook, we are unable to walk).

When the poet speaks of Coalbrook which has snatched Africa's rod and staff, one feels the heart-breaking pain in the poet's heart. Everybody mourns because that which the Lord has snatched through death, will never come back again. Parents who were to look after their families in various ways, will never get that chance again. Instead the children are orphans and the mothers are helpless widows. Most of those orphans will never get a chance of furthering their studies because of lack of finance, since the breadwinner is no more. This is the beginning of poverty and frustration.

It is not only the South Africans that mourn the deceased, but even the neighbouring states do mourn. The sea and all that is in it, heard of this and mourned. This is a sign that the death of one affects all, even nature gets affected. The poet says;

*Ga go a lla lefase la Afrika-Borwa fela,
Tikologo ya mohlaba le mawatlle e kudupane,
E kwele tša Coalbrook marapo a thuthumela,
Sello sa pipa mašata a diphefo le meetse,
Lešela le lesoleso le mometše Afrika pelong,
Masea a sa tlo llela ba pshetšeng Coalbrook,
Gobane e ahlame boka kwena ya metša meretše.*

(Machaka 1981:107)

(South Africa did not mourn alone,
The whole universe mourned,
When hearing Coalbrook news the world shivered,
The cry covered the noise of winds and waters.
A black cloth has covered Africa's heart,
Babies are still to mourn Coalbrook victims,
Because it opened its mouth like a crocodile and swallowed
its victims).

We are consoled by the Christian mood of the last stanza of this poem. Indeed, the cruelty of death is overshadowed by the mercy which is full of warmth from the consoling words which read -

*Robalang mo khutšong, balewa-ke-Coalbrook,
Morena o le file malao a tšhepo le tumelo,
Yena o le diretše lebitla le sa tsebjeng -
Leo le beng kgole le mašata a didumišanaga;
Fela ka tšatši la bofelo O tla le gopola,
Afrika wee! homola o se re hlomole pelo,
Bana ba gago ba robetše kgauswi le Morena.*

(Machaka 1981:107)

(Rest in peace, Coalbrook victims,
The Lord has given you a resting place of hope and trust,
He made for you an unknown grave -
Which is away from noise;
But He will think of you on the last day,
You Africa, be consoled and do not break our hearts,
Your children have slept next to God).

In this way Machaka's elegy arrives at a consolation and does not leave us with consolation and say that the problem is solved. It presents us with the quest, inseparable from its ending in the work of art. It expresses in a convincing manner profound and personal grief. That is where Machaka's success in his elegies lies.

4.2.4 *Lehu la Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa* (Naledi 1981:109-113)

This poem is also an elegy in which Batlokwa lament the death of a king. Like his other elegiac poems, it has a special rich tradition. It is a real elegy, in which elements of wit are present. He opens this lament with the traditional phrase of

Mabu a utswitšwe!
Joo! Joo! re lahlegetšwe ke thekga-mahlale,
Masedi o re širogile, letšatši le a re fiša;
O iketše, noka ya Mononong ya nwa meetse.
Robala botse, 'tšhikwana ya mange a bohlale'
(Machaka 1981:108)

(Soil is stolen! (The King is dead!)
Joo! Joo! we have lost a wise supporter,
Masedi has given way, we suffer the sun's heat;
He is gone, Dwarsriver stopped flowing
Rest in peace, Claypot, of wise curd).

In this very first stanza, the poet gives the reader a vivid picture of the departed king. Instead of speaking of death having taken away their leader, he speaks of Masedi (the king) *o re širogile, letšatši le a re fiša*. (Masedi has given way, we suffer from the sun's heat). Here the poet gives the reader the idea that king Masedi Ramokgopa was a shelter, and now that the shelter has shifted, the people who were protected by it, are exposed to a very intense heat and are helpless.

It should be noted however, that unlike other African elegies, like the AKA-speaking people of Southern Ghana, the Lemba and the others, the Batlokwa elegies by Machaka are not lyrical. They are just poems expressing personal emotion. Machaka has written these poems without expounding in long-winded stanzas all the means and forms in which death is a threat to life. The contents of the whole poem express turmoil. In the second stanza the poet says

Koma e ribegilwe! ...
Ra bona lefase la bo-Kgwadu le apere boso,
Kgoši Masedi ga lilelwa ke batho le diruiwa,
Dihlare le mafsika a Botlokwa re bone a lla.
Robala botse, wena lemati la tšwelopele).
Machaka 1981:108)

(The drum is put aside! ...
The world of Kgwadu and company is dressed in black,
Not only was king Masedi mourned by people and animals,
Trees and stones of Botlokwa also mourned,
Rest well, you the door of progress).

Traditionally we know that in *Koma*, fundamental lessons are imparted to the pupils. They are mainly intended for instruction. The pupils are, as explained by Guma

instructed on the virtues of communal life, the traditional lore of the people as well as decent habits of living, including what pitfalls to avoid in life ...

Secondly they are taught what may be called historical excerpts, which deal with migrations and apparent persecution in the dim and distant past.

(Guma 1985:116)

The poet speaks of such important knowledge - knowledge that teaches a nation of the future life at large, and has been suspended. He does not tell us of the duration of suspension of this school of knowledge which means, if it takes a long period or if it discontinues permanently, the fundamental lessons to the youth will disappear. The result would be a lawless community and nation. More still, the nation would thrive in darkness and will have no knowledge.

The nation mourns Masedi because to them he was a parent. What is striking is the fact that he is not only mourned by the nation - even domestic animals, trees and stones of Botlokwa mourn for his departure. The whole universe and all that is in it mourn.

Traditionally, when a person dies, in the homestead, it is always believed that the gods are angry because they have been wronged in one way or another. That is the reason why the poet says

Badimo ba re tšeešē!
Wena re kgopelele badimong ba re lebalele,
Bona ba tšee boitsholo bja rena bo ye godimo, ...
(Machaka 1981:108)

(The gods have snatched away from us!
Ask on our behalf that the gods forgive us,
In turn they should please take our shame to the Lord...)

In instances like these, they sacrifice a beast in order to appease them. They know the wrath of the gods by the death of one of them.

Veld burning is always very destructive. When the poet asserts

Hlaga e swele!
Mokgoši o hlabilwe ra kwa go lla koma,
Yona ya tlaleletšwa ke dillo tša diruiwa,
Ge e le sello sa Batlokwa sa khurumetša naga,
(Machaka 1981:109)

(The veld has burnt!
People screamed and a drum sounded,
Thereafter animals mourned,
As for Batlokwa's mourning cry filled the earth, ...)

One gets a vivid picture of turmoil that the veld fire causes. All types of animals and reptiles run amok, running for dear lives, with the hope of escaping, the majority of them though, never survived. I imagine the deafening noise of the pleading voices from all types of animals. Pleading to the merciless fire to spare them. To the majority of them, their plea fell on deaf ears because the cruel fire burned them beyond recognition. The poet likens the death of Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa with veld fire. The mourning of the whole nation together with that of the domestic animals is compared with the pleading sounds for rescue of the wild animals. This tells the story in a very blatant way. This shows what happens to a nation upon the death of its loyal king. The lament is heard far and near. Unfortunately death cannot be reversed. No amount of lament can ever bring back the dead.

We are only consoled by the belief that when the dead leaves the earth, he descends to the ancestral world where he joins other ancestors. This is proved by the words of the poet which say:

*Papa o boditše pap'a rena!
 Theeletša, kgoši Mmamokutupi o a folletša;
 O ya godimo le fase o phepelela lebotlana,
 O re naase badimo ba Botlokwa ba oketšegile, ...*
 (Machaka 1981:109)

(Father has called our father!
 Listen, king Mmamokutupi is ululating;
 He goes up and down dancing for the calf,
 Saying today Batlokwa's ancestors have increased, ...)

It is our staunch belief that there is life after death. Be it Christian belief or traditional belief. One minister of religion once said that death visits each and every home. It comes in uninvited. This is evidenced in the stanza below:

*Mononong o tletše mahlodi!
 Maloba mahlodi a be a falalela Kgarahara,
 Maabane a be a rothela Tau ya Maboing -
 Naase a nela wena bjalo ka pula ya tsheola.
 Botlokwa bo llela Masedi kgoši ya poloko;
 Le a lla, le a lla, lefase la Tšhaka le Matome.*
 (Machaka 1981:110)

(Dwarsriver is full of tears!
 Day before yesterday we were mourning Kgarahara,
 Yesterday it was Tau of Maboing -
 Today it pours for you like first rain of the season.
 Botlokwa is mourning Masedi the peaceful king;
 It is mourning, it is mourning the world of
 Tšhaka and Matome).

This stanza proves that we all shall die, each one of us; irrespective of status, colour or creed. This is emphasised by Ngoni song recorded by Read in Finnegan:

The earth does not get fat. It makes an end of those who
 wear the head plumes (the older men)
 We shall die on the earth.
 The earth does not get fat, it makes an end
 of those who act swiftly as heroes
 Shall we die on the earth?

Listen O earth. We shall mourn because of you.
Listen O earth. Shall we die on the earth?

The earth does not get fat. It makes an end on the chiefs,
Shall we all die on the earth?

Listen O earth. We shall mourn because of you.
Listen O earth. Shall we die on the earth?

The earth does not get fat. It makes an end on the nobles.
Shall we die on the earth?
The earth does not get fat. It makes an end of the royal
women.
Shall we die on the earth?

Listen O earth. We shall mourn because of you.
Listen O earth. Shall we all die on the earth?
The earth does not get fat. It makes the end of
the common people.
Shall we die on the earth?

The earth does not get fat. It makes an end of
all the beasts.
Shall we die on the earth?

Listen you who are asleep, who are left tightly
closed in the land.
Shall we all sink into the earth?
Listen O earth the sun is setting tightly,
We shall all enter into the earth.

(Finnegan 1976:151-152)

Having read this dirge, we must accept the facts of life. We shall all die. The Batlokwa nation must also find consolation in these words - that death is the way of life, not one is going to escape it.

With an emphasis on the power of poetic art itself, Machaka's elegy moves towards acceptance and adjustment, because it incorporates the essence of that which in physical terms is dead. This is evidenced in the last stanza of this poem:

Mabu a utswitšwe!
Mosima kgoka pelo senna o leboge setšhaba;
O se ke wa rwala pelo ya sesadi o le monna,

Motlogolo wa gago Masedi o le šile seeding,
Robala botse, Thaga, sellelwa-ke-diketekete,
Robala botse, Nkwe ya Botlokwa phuthaditšhaba;
Robala botse, Masedi, kgoši ya letswai la thuto.
(Machaka 1967:113)

(Soil is stolen! (The King is dead)
Mosima be brave and thank the tribe;
Don't behave like a woman while you are a man,
Your nephew Masedi has left you in the light,
Rest well, Thaga, the one mourned by thousands,
Rest well, Nkwe of Botlokwa protector of nations;
Rest well, Masedi, king with salt for education).

In this context the last lines of the stanza are a means of praising the dead. He is honoured and mourned. The general links between his past deeds and the present are brought out. The sorrow felt by the mourners is well pronounced.

4.3 FORM

The words of a French Symbolist, Mallarmé; in Tambling will serve as a springboard for this discussion:

You don't write poems with ideas,
You write them with words.
(Tambling 1988:23)

Upon reading Machaka's poems, the first thing to notice is his language which succeeds in making his poetry exceptional. He has used it artistically.

When speaking of form in poetry, we mean conventional arrangements of metre and rhyme patterns. The creative artist therefore, according to Heese and Lawton

imposes order upon chaos of his material by a process of elimination and organisation. He must be able to control and manipulate his basic material.
(Heese and Lawton 1978:11)

In the case of a writer, as already said, his material is language which he must be in a position to manipulate.

When explaining form Lenake maintains:

Poetic form is a term which refers to the external shapes of a poem in contrast to structure which is seen as the internal organization to the composition of the poem.

(Lenake 1984:119)

Poetic form therefore is more perceivable than its structure. Form can be verified by structural analysis. It is the outcome of a particular patterning of structures that have been accepted.

Jacob Korg asserts:

Poetic form belongs to the class of things we call conventions - tacit arrangements or understandings that grow up spontaneously in social groups ... In any given situation, a speaker will express himself according to the custom, and his hearer will accept and understand his use of it. In the same way, the effect of poetic organization depends on both the work of the poet and the expectations of the reader.

(Korg 1959:46)

Korg refers to the usage of the term form in poetry as being confined to some technical and mechanical matters like stanzas, metre, etcetera. Form is important only in so far as it enhances significance.

When speaking of form, Simpson L says it is

Any of the standard, highly structured arrangements of metre and rhyme patterns that define a poem.

(Simpson 1972:42)

From the definitions and explanations of form given in the preceding excerpt, we can safely speak of poets being "makers", who know how poems are put together. Even perhaps if they do not know the names for technical devices, they use them successfully throughout their poems.

4.3.1 Rhythm

When defining the poetic technique, rhythm, Simpson, L says

Rhythm is a form cut into time. It is the entire movement, the flow, the recurrence of stress and unstress that is related to the rhythm of the blood, the rhythms of nature. It involves certainly stress, time, pitch, the texture of the words, the total meaning of the poem.

(Simpson 1972:450)

Heese and Lawton define rhythm as

an effectual movement or flow that is brought about by the poet's use of emphasis and tempo.

(Heese and Lawton 1978:14)

To the preceding definitions, we can add that rhythm is essential in poetry. We want stress to be repeated so that we keep on listening.

The meaning of a poem is thus not only expressed through context of utterance, vocabulary and syntax, but also through sound qualities such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and assonance to name but a few. Among other things, rhythm can be used to reinforce a sense of order in a poem or undercut it by departing from regularity. It can add a musical element in a poem by encouraging a pleasurable expectation of a repeated pattern. It can also enhance the feeling or mood of a poem or just contribute to the heightening of poetic language.

Machaka uses this element successfully in his elegies. The rhythm in the poems is indicated by lengths on the penultimate syllables.

The following lines, are proof of his success in the usage of this technique;

*Botlokwa bo lobi:le phafa ya selete e phumegi:le,
E ile kgoši ye e nweleng thu:to kua Mathose:ng,
Masedi o re tloge:tše re swere mohlako le tšhi:u,
Mahlo a Botlokwa ga a sa bo:na a tletše meo:kgo,
Dipepilankwe di llela kgo:ši sebuša ka temo:go.
Robala botse we:na sefu sa go pipetša mare:na.*

(Machaka 1967:113)

(Botlokwa has suffered a loss, region's calabash has broken,
He is gone the King that drank education in Xhosaland,
Masedi has left us, we are in poverty;
Batlokwa's eyes are unable to see, they are full of tears,
They are mourning for a King that ruled with expertise.
Rest well you the snare that covers the Kings).

Though rhythm in poetry is not everything, it is nevertheless essential, because it is essential to meaning.

4.3.2 Caesura

Another technique that Machaka has successfully used in his elegiac poetry is caesura. Caesura is a Latin word, which means cutting. He has made use of this pause within the line of verse, which normally is caused by natural organisation of a language into phrases, clauses and sentences which do not conform to the metrical pattern. It is said that a caesura is an important way of introducing variety into metrical forms suitable for long poems. In Machaka (1967:112) lines three and four, of the third stanza are a caesura:

*Pelo ya gago e a e bona, e lekelela Sello;
E šitilwe go rwala Sello, Masedi a nwetše.*

(Machaka 1967:112)

(Your heart we see is hanging a cry,
It could not carry the cry, Masedi has died).

The division of the sentence although it does not bring a change in a poem's meaning only shows that at times a poem can consist of one sentence which is cut. We also find this type of caesura in the Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions - namely:

Dijo di bitša bagwera, lehu le bitša beng.
(Food invites friends, death affects next of kin).

The above expression can also be written thus:

*Dijo di bitša bagwera,
Lehu le bitša beng.*

(Food invites friends,
death affects the next of kin).

The second manner in which the idiomatic expression is written shows that some idiomatic expressions can be regarded as poems.

In a caesura, the phrases, must be linked together. In the given example the word *sello* (cry) brings a linkage between the two phrases:

*Pelo ya gago re a e bona e lekelela sello,
E šitilwe go rwala sello, Masedi a nwetše.*

(Your heart we see is hanging a cry,
It could not carry the cry, Masedi has died).

The sentence which is cut into two phrases (caesura) must have equal syllables - Machaka says

*Ga go a lla lefase/la Afrika Borwa fela 8/8
Tukulogo ya mohlaba/le mawatle e kudupane 8/9
E kwele tša Coalbrook/marapo a thuthumela 8/8*
(Machaka 1967:107)

(South Africa did not mourn alone
The whole universe together with the oceans mourned
It heard of Coalbrook and shuddered).

The usage of this technique enables the lines in each stanza to be equal.

4.3.3 Metre

An element of form in poetry is defined by Simpson, L as

the regular recurrence of patterns of accented and unaccented syllables.

(Simpson 1972:435)

His definition corresponds with the one provided by Marie Heese and Robin Lawton who assert:

metre is a repetitive and symmetrical patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables on which a poem may be based.

(Heese and Lawton 1978:13)

The basic metre of a poem, then, is only one of the complex of elements contributing to the overall rhythm of a poem. Metre is like waves of the sea, which come in at a regular pace. Without meaning though, metre drifts in a void, which simply means that there must first be meaning in a poem for metre to support it. Poetry, therefore, has both meaning and metre, and in a good poem they are so closely related that they seem one thing.

From the explanation given above, we can conclude by saying metre is a very regular rhythmic pattern. When the poet breaks away from this regular pattern, the rhythm becomes affected in all sorts of ways.

It is difficult to discern metre in African poetry. When using this feature, Machaka uses equal rhythmic patterns in each line of his poem. In the example given below, the majority of lines have four rhythmic patterns:

Gadi:ma o lebele:le mahlo:ng a MaAfri:ka! (4)

Dipe:lo tša bo:na di sa rwe:le tlale:lo; (4)

Mafahle:ng a tha:ri ya ge:šo go šoba:ne, (4)
Lebele:la Afri:ka e ape:re mahlo:di a le:hu, (5)
Goba:ne Coalbro:ok e ba ubu:tše mekokotle:lo, (4)
E ba robi:le le matso:go a go kope:la mego:la, (4)
E re robi:le Coabroo:k, re š:i:twā go sepe:la, (4)
 (Machaka 1971:106)

(Look at the eyes of Africans!
 Their hearts still carry confusion;
 In the minds of my people there is sadness,
 Look Africa is wearing mourning tears,
 Because Coalbrook has snatched the leaning rods,
 It has broken them hoeing hands;
 It has broken us Coalbrook, we are unable to walk).

4.3.4 Rhyme

Poetry is a form of music, which appeals through the ear, direct to the emotions. Rhyme is one of the sound features of poetry which reinforce meaning. It is used in literary criticism to refer to the repetition of chiming or matching sounds of poetry. It is usually at the end of lines, and it is connected with the rhythm and the words that echo each other. Its function though, is always dependent on the context in which it occurs. Rhyme does not function in isolation.

When elaborating on rhyme, Martin Gray says:

Rhyme is *rhuthmos* in Greek, which means flowing. Though by no means all verse is rhymed, rhyme is one of the most striking and obvious differences between verse and prose ... it consists of chiming or matching sounds at the end of lines of verse ...

(Gray 1984:175)

We have already said in the previous chapter that rhyme is not so easily applied in African languages, due to their different syllabic structure consisting mainly of a consonant - vowel combination. This feature is more restricted and the possibilities for rhyme are limited considerably. Another influencing factor is because African languages are tonal.

However, two general functions of rhyme as cited by Ramogale's Exploring Poetry Through Language; are:

the repetition of similar sounds creates an audible sense of pattern and is thus a source of aesthetic satisfaction. We derive pleasure from the impression of music which the repetition of chiming sounds create.

Rhyme may also play crucial role in the structural organization of a poem. It can help bind a poem together or bring a pair of words into a pleasing or revealing relationship with each other.

(Ramogale (S.a):55)

Unfortunately, like the majority of African poets, Machaka does not make use of this feature in his elegiac poems.

4.3.5 Stanza

A stanza as defined by Martin Gray is

A unit of several lines of verse; a repeated group of lines of verse ... The lines may be rhymed or not, their metre may be constant throughout or varied from line to line ...

(Gray 1984:196)

Shipley defines stanza as

A group of lines of verse (any number, most frequently 4) with a definite metrical and rhyming pattern; which becomes the unit of structure for repetition throughout the poem.

(Shipley 1972:395)

Simpson, L. says:

Stanza is a group of lines considered as a unit, forming a division of a poem, and recurring in the same pattern or variations of the pattern. A stanza pattern is determined by the number of lines ...

(Simpson 1972:454)

The above definitions by the various scholars are all relevantly defined in Machaka's elegiac poems. We do not want to analyse the definitions linguistically because according to Shipley's definition, we should only use the word "stanza" when there are rhyme and rhythmic patterns. In that case he suggests that we rather speak of a verse paragraph; because Altenbernd and Lewis explain a verse paragraph as follows:

Sometimes lines are irregularly grouped so that the divisions correspond to important stages in the development of the narrative or discussion. Such units vary in length and are not marked by any set scheme or rhymes, if, indeed, the lines are rhymed at all.

(Altenbernd and Lewis 1966:44)

We agree that the definitions do carry the same sense; which we summarize by D.B.Z. Ntuli where he says:

We expect each stanza ... to imply some unit of thought which is separated from that contained in the other portions of the poem. This is not an independent thought, though, but is a step in the arrangement of a series of ideas which are contained in the poem.

(Ntuli 1984:232)

This Machaka has successfully achieved. In the poem **Botlokwa bo Faletše**, we find the poet using six lines for every stanza. Each stanza implies some unit of thought. This is done in a commendable manner. Machaka does not always use stanzas of equal lines. In some of his elegies, a stanza has seven lines. He is therefore not consistent with this pattern.

Among Machaka's elegiac poems, only one will be quoted. The reason for quoting a few lines of one poem is the fact that they are similar.

In the first stanza, the poet speaks of God. He requests the Lord to comfort the bereaved families. This is a complete thought. The poet says

Tšea letsogo la Gago o phumule bana mahlodi,
(Machaka 1967:44)

(Take Your hand and wipe the children's tears).

In the second stanza, he speaks about the date of the accident. He accuses the cursed day, of the accident, in these words:

O reng o phurile Batlokwa ka meno a sehlogo?
(Machaka 1967:44)

(Why did you crush Batlokwa with cruel teeth?)

The third stanza is directed to the train which caused the accident. He relates what the train did, thus:

Joo! Joo! tšhukutšhuku e kgaotše ditšhika,
Setimela sa Mosenā se faladitše madi a Balea, ...
(Machaka 1967:44)

(Joo! Joo! the train has cut the ligaments,
Messina train has spilt Balea's blood),

Machaka's stanzas in his poems do have a fairly organised and fixed pattern; each with a complete thought, which is a step in the arrangement of a series of ideas contained in a poem.

4.3.6 Repetition techniques

Repetition is the technique that is used in Northern Sotho by most poets. It comes up in various forms. Repetition as explained by Martin Gray is

A vital part of language of literature both in verse and prose. Repetition creates the sense of PATTERN or FORM in a work of literature, ... it may be the repetition with ... variation of sound patterns ... At a more particular level, repetition is used for ... emphasis.

(Gray 1984:172)

Machaka uses the following repetition techniques: Repetition of a verb root for an example *lla*-

- (a) *Re a bona o a lla Mabeba, ...*
Re a bona o a lla Mosima, ...
(Machaka 1967:5)

(We see you are mourning Mabeba, ...
We see you are mourning Mosima, ...)

- (b) *Kgoši Masedi ga a lletwa ke batho le diruiwa,*
Dihlare le mafsika a Botlokwa re a bone a lla.
(Machaka 1967:108)

(Chief Masedi was not only mourned by people and
animals,
Trees and stones of Botlokwa we saw them mourn.

- (c) *Pelo ya gago re a bona e lekelela sello;*
E šitilwe ke go rwala sello, Masedi a nwetše.
(Machaka 1967:112)

(We see your heart is full of sorrow;
It cannot bear the pain, Masedi having died).

We also find repetition of nouns in Machaka's elegiac poems, namely

- (a) *E šita le meetse a Botlokwa a rwala tlalelo,*
O bjetše bohlokwa Botlokwa bo tla re homotša.
(Machaka 1967:9)

(Even, Botlokwa water became confused,
He sow importance Botlokwa will console us).

- (b) *Ga se lerole la mabu le le lemogang Balea,*
Ke lerole la mahlodi a llang komakoma.
(Machaka 1967:110)

(It is not ground dust what you see Balea,
It is dust of tears that mourn the king).

4.3.7 Parallelism

We do find parallelism in Machaka's elegiac poems. This technique implies similarities which often occur between successive lines. Guma defines parallelism as

... a certain similarity between two parts or members of a sentence whose words correspond to one another.
(Guma 1985:159)

The correspondence of words or phrases in successive lines may occur at the beginning of lines and is termed initial parallelism. Examples of initial parallelism are:

- (a) *Bjona bo swana le phukubje e tšeang le fiša,*
Bjona bo swana le moeti yo botšididi lehu,
(Machaka 1967:108)

(It is like a jackal which steals during daylight,
It is like a cold visitor, death,)

- (b) *Re a bona o a lla Mabeba, homola Nkwe e kgolo,*
Re a bona o a lla Mosima, homola Nkwe e kgolo.
(Machaka 1967:5)

(We see you mourn Mabeba, be comforted great Nkwe,
We see you mourn Mosima, be comforted great Nkwe).

Machaka uses repetition in various ways. We also find repetition of various types of verbs like in the examples given below:

- (a) *Emelela o phumule mahlodi a setšhaba, Mabeba,*
Ema o fe Batlokwa tshepo ba tlaletšwe, Mosima,
Emelela o fe thari ya Dinkwe seedi Manthata,
(Machaka 1967:5)

(Stand up and wipe the nation's tears, Mabeba,
Stand and give Batlokwa hope they are confused,
Mosima,
Stand up and give Dinkwe kinship light Manthata).

- (b) **O robetše** a hloka tshele le motho Kgarahara,
O sepetše a se a ja sa motho ka bohvirihwiri,
 (Machaka 1967:8)

(He slept being at peace with everybody Kgarahara,
 He left without having cheated anybody,)

Repetition as stated earlier, is particularly useful to the poets because it creates pleasing echoes without the restrictions of regular end-rhyme. Use is also made of selected words and their synonyms in order to emphasise the elegy. Machaka makes use of this repetition technique in various ways. He repeats a word in one sentence thus:

- (a) *Wena Moemedi, Wena khutšo, Wena Moratabohle,*
 (Machaka 1967:44)

(You Representative, You Peace, You Lover of All,)

- (b) *Dihlare di tšotše mahlare!*
 (Machaka 1967:111)

(Trees have shed leaves!)

- (c) *Mo barongwa ba tumišang Jehofa ba mo retang,*
 (Machaka 1967:6)

(Where angels praise Jehova and exalt Him,)

Machaka makes frequent use of the vertical line repetition pattern in his elegiac poems. This occurs when a repetition occupies the same position in the line, as shown below:

- (a) *Re a bona | o a lla | Mabeba, | homola | Nkwe | e kgolo,*
Re a bona | o a lla | Mosima, | homola | Nkwe | e kgolo,
 (Machaka 1967:5)

(We see you mourn Mabeba be comforted great
 Nkwe,
 We see you mourn Mosima be comforted great
 Nkwe,)

- (b) *Wena Jehofa o tla re fa gape ngwedi o mongwe,*
Wena Jehofa o tla re agela gape lebotoboto.
 (Machaka 1967:5)

(You Jehova you will give us again another moon,
You Jehova you will build us again a strong wall).

- (c) **Ba ile** botate ba llwe ke Coalbrook,
Ba sepetše bana ba mosadi yo moswanaswana,
Ba re tlogetše lefaseng la go tsetsemetša;
(Machaka 1967:106)

(They are gone our fathers Coalbrook has eaten
them,
They are gone children of a pitch black woman,
They left us on the earth that pricks;)

Another type of repetition is oblique-line repetition pattern with right-to-left slant.

This will be illustrated in the following lines:

- (a) *Mokoti wa Coalbrook | o lle | ditšhabatšhaba,*
O phurile | thari | ye e sa tsebeng | dibalabala,
(Machaka 1967:106)

(Coalbrook pit has eaten various nations,
It chewed a nation that cannot complain,)

- (b) *O tšwile mor'wa Machaka a hlakana le tša go baba*
Hlakanahlaka o hlakane le serumula sa lehu,
(Machaka 1967:45)

(He went out Machaka's son and met bitter things
He met wooden-torch of death,)

Oblique-line repetition pattern with left to right slant is also found in Machaka's elegies.

Machaka has not made good use of this pattern. Examples of this type are therefore very few;

- (a) *Ba amogeleng ba tlile lapeng la komakoma,*
Ba lletšeng mekgolokwane ba tlile go le oketša,
(Machaka 1967:46)

(Welcome them they have come to the real home
Ululate for them for they have come to increase you).

*Kgoši Masedi ga a lletwa ke batho le diruiwa,
Dihlare le maswika a Botlokwa re bone a lla.*
(Machaka 1967:108)

(King Masedi was not mourned by people and animals
Trees and stones of Botlokwa also mourned.)

4.3.8 Discontinuous repetitions

This type of repetition patterns are the ones in which a repeated phrase occurs in the line immediately following the line of their previous occurrence. There is a line or at times lines that intervene in between, giving what is called discontinuous repetitions. Below is an example,

*O ile mo tlala le lenyora di sa tsebjeng,
Homola Mpheuwana 'a Tšhaka, o holofele Johova,
Mo Kgoboko a ileng le rena re tla mo hwetša,*
(Machaka 1967:44)

(He has gone where hunger and thirst are unknown,
Be comforted Mpheuwana of Tšhaka and trust in Jehofa,
Where Kgoboko has gone we shall find him),

Like the oblique line repetitions pattern with left-to-right slant, Machaka has very few examples of this technique in his elegiac poems.

4.4 STRUCTURE

Whereas structure of a poem is dictated by how the poet's mind works, when explaining the structure of a poem, Miller and Curry, as cited by Lenake say:

By structure of a poem we don't mean simply the stanza form, metre, and rhythm in a regular poem, or the metrical patterns and line lengths in a free verse poem. We mean the organising principle behind the poem, the way the thought or mood is presented - what has led one contemporary poet to assert that poems organise themselves.

(Lenake 1984:120)

This explanation seems to agree with the definition of structure by Simpson, L. who says structure is

The underlying logic or arrangement and movements in a literary text, its skeleton or paraphrasable content. The term "structure" refers to the organization of elements other than words.

(Simpson 1972:455)

When elaborating on structure, Simpson, L. says:

Structure does not consist only of rhythmic patterns such as stanza; there may be a pattern of symbols or a structure of language. And there may be two or more structures in combination; indeed, as there are so many patterns in the use of words, syntax, plot and symbolism, it would be hard to imagine a poem that had only a single, discernible structure.

(Simpson 1972:455)

From the preceding explanations, the researcher may safely say structure deals with figurative language; the language which means something more than or other than it literally says.

4.4.1 Imagery

We find more concentrated use of imagery in poetry, in general. Imagery is a sub-category of symbolism. About imagery Warren and Wellek say:

An "image" may be evoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs both as a presentation and representation it becomes a symbolic (or mythic) system.

(Warren and Wellek 1948:194)

Imagery, therefore is the use of words that bring pictures to the mind of the listener or reader; or that appeal to any of the other senses, sound, touch, taste, smell or hearing. The poet often makes his statements and conveys his ideas by comparing one thing with another.

Writing on imagery Fogle defines it as

... analogy or comparison, having a special force or identity from the peculiar aesthetic and concentrative form of poetry. It is to be judged according to its creative power, the connotative richness of its content, and the harmonious unity and fusion of its elements.

(Fogle 1962:22-23)

It should be borne in mind that imagery can range from purely denotative descriptions to highly figurative ones.

In this section, we shall deal with the figures of speech under imagery. The main forms of imagery that we shall discuss include among others, metaphor, personification, symbolism and euphemism.

4.4.2 Personification

In defining personification, Simpson, L. says:

A figurative use of language in which human qualities or feelings are attributed to non-human organisms, inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

(Simpson 1972:443)

It is a special type of metaphor. Kreuzer, J.R. has this to say about it:

Personification is a special form of comparison. It is defined as representation of an inanimate object or abstract idea as endowed with personal attributes.

(Kreuzer 1955:100)

This type of figure of speech, which is a kind of image too, Machaka uses with ease and great success. Inanimate things are made to do what human beings do. One striking and vivid example is found in Machaka:

*Dinoka tša Botlokwa di kwele tša ema go ela,
Tša khutša gatee tša llela noka ya khutšo,
Ga llelwa ke rena feela le diphoofolo di letše,
E šita le meetse a Botlokwa a rwala tlalelo,*

(Machaka 1967:9)

(Botlokwa rivers heard this and stopped flowing,
They stopped for a moment and mourned for the peace river,
Not we alone mourned, the animals also mourned,
Even Botlokwa water became confused,)

In the preceding stanza, we are given a picture of rivers that have ears to hear. Water that has an understanding mind. Rivers that heard of the death of Kgoši Kgarahara and stopped flowing to mourn his death. This shows that rivers are given the qualities of human beings because they understand what human beings say by response. Even the water in the rivers have human feelings because it became muddled-up upon hearing of the departure of Kgoši Kgarahara. This technique of emotional humanisation of the inanimate offers an interesting variety in the poet's mode of expression.

Machaka gives inanimate objects human actions. Inanimate objects are made to do what is done by human beings. The title of the poem itself has personified the Coalbrook mine, because the mine cries: Sello sa Coalbrook.

*Coalbrook e šišinyegile ya metša masogana,
E ahlame ya šwalalanya diphura-maswika.*

.....
*Ba ile botate ba llwe ke Coalbrook,
Mokoti wa Coalbrook o lle ditšhabatšhaba,*

.....
*Gobane Coalbrook e ba ubutše mekokotlelo,
E ba robile le matsogo a go kopela megola;
E re robile Coalbrook, re šitwa go sepela.*

(Machaka 1967:106)

(Coalbrook shook and swallowed young men,
It opened its mouth and shuttered the stone-crushers,
.....
Gone are fathers, eaten up by Coalbrook,
Coalbrook mine has eaten up a crowd,
.....
Because Coalbrook has snatched away their walking sticks,

It has crushed their hoeing hands;
It has crushed us Coalbrook, we are paralysed).

In this poem in particular, Machaka has succeeded in giving his inanimate object, Coalbrook mine, physical characteristics which are found in human beings. The poet describes Coalbrook mine as if it were a person who has a mouth that opens and has the ability to swallow. The mine is so strong that it is in a position to crush the hands and feet of the miners and leave the entire Batlokwa population paralysed.

4.4.3 Metaphor

Apart from sound qualities, a poem may use visual aids like metaphor to reinforce meaning. They are useful because they clarify meaning by rendering it in a way that heightens our visual response.

Poets use metaphors, figures of speech in which one thing is likened to or identified with another. Pointing out the difference between a simile and a metaphor, Serudu et al say:

... in metaphor the comparison is not explicit and direct, but implicit and indirect. It does not liken the two elements but equates them.

(Serudu et al 1989:98)

Whereas Untermeyer places metaphor above simile when he says

A metaphor is usually more effective than a simile because it makes an instant comparison and an imaginative fusion of two objects without the use of explanatory prepositions.

(Untermeyer 1968:225)

In view of the above definitions therefore, we can rightfully say, through metaphor, an idea may be translated into an image. In so doing, we apprehend the idea through our senses, because we can only understand a thing when we know how it looks like or what it sounds or feels like.

We must bear in mind that it is not only poets who think metaphorically - all people do. The first person for instance to talk about the foot of a mountain had made a metaphor. He was identifying what he saw with himself, a part of his body.

Consider what Machaka says:

(a) *Sepela botse, wena letata la go hlola šobane.*
(Machaka 1967:8)

(b) *Sepela botse, wena pula ya tsheola.*
(Machaka 1967:10)

(Go well, you kaross that beats the cold,
Go well, you first rain of the season).

(c) *Robala botse, wena lemati la tšwelopele.*
Robala botse, šobane ya go šošobantšha botlatla.
(Machaka 1967:113)

(Sleep well, you the door of progress
Sleep well, frost that creases stupidity).

In all the examples given, kgoši Masedi and kgoši Kgarahara are identified with and equated with the elements. Machaka has enhanced his elegiac poems by successfully making use of metaphor.

4.4.4 Simile

Unlike metaphor, which can awaken all sorts of complex associations in our minds, simile consists of a comparison on a fairly straightforward kind between two things. A simile is introduced by the words 'like' or 'as' or sometimes both. A simile is not usually as startling or illuminating as a metaphor. Instead, it is an illustration of something we already know, or an expression of some general truth, or part of an argument. The two things compared remain separate in simile, whereas in metaphor they interact to create something new. In his elegies the poet makes use of similes very sparingly. The only example found is where he compares pain as follows:

*Ruri bohloko ga bo tlwaelege le gateetee;
Bjona bo swana le phukubje e tšeang le fiša,
Bjona bo swana le moeti yo botšididi lehu,*

(Machaka 1981:108)

(Surely it is difficult to get used to pain;
It is like a jackal that steals during the day,
It is like a cold visitor death,)

The pain that the poet compares here, is the pain of death, which is compared with a jackal that steals during the day and death the cold visitor. I believe, no one feels the pain that the Batlokwa nation are feeling; no one can also share in the intensity of the loss they are experiencing. Only they know how painful it is. Only they know the desperate grief. Bereavement is such a painful process and it evokes so much anxiety.

4.4.5 Euphemism

Martin Gray, when explaining and defining euphemism says,

The word euphemism is a Greek word meaning 'speaking fair'.

(Gray 1984:80)

He further says,

unpleasant, embarrassing or frightening facts or words can be concealed behind 'euphemism'; a word or phrase that is less blunt, rude or terrifying. And because death is frightening, that is why it is dealt with euphemistically.

(Gray 1984:80)

In other words, euphemism is the use of a pleasant word or phrase for a word or a phrase that is not pleasant. These words are found in abundance in Machaka's elegiac poems. As we all know, death is a brutal monster. In most cases, it kills for no purpose. People therefore, like to use euphemism when speaking about death, perhaps because they are powerless before death, they want to dispel all fears of death and to accept it. Machaka says:

Kgoši Kgarahara o ithobaletše sa ruri.

(Machaka 1967:5)

(Kgoši Kgarahara has slept for good ...)

He uses the popular conception of death as a gentle sleep which enables one to be freed from the problems and hardships of this life. This he says as if kgoši Kgarahara would wake up and feel refreshed and ready for further fuller existence. How he states the death of Kgoši Kgarahara does not instil fear or sorrow in the listener's ear, because this is done euphemistically.

Further on in this poem Machaka says:

Sepela botse ...

(Machaka 1967:10)

(Go well ...)

When one says to another, go well, we normally assume that because he leaves, he will come back. Machaka bids Kgarahara farewell as if the deceased would one day come back from the place he is visiting.

This statement gives a picture of someone walking away and disappearing in the distance but coming back sooner or later. It also gives a picture of someone who has not died but who only moved away for a while, whereas we shall see him no more.

As one reads Machaka's elegies one becomes more and more aware that these poems affect him personally because he speaks of deaths of his close relatives. We observe though that his usage of euphemism alleviates the pain of the sorrowful deaths which directly involve him. When the poet Machaka says:

Papa o biditše pap'a rena!

(Machaka 1967:109)

(Father has called our father!)

the statement sounds very innocent and simple - "A father has called his son". Whereas its deep structured meaning is that God has called Kgarahara to eternity. His children (nation) will never see him again.

The preceding statement reminds us of the story of Lazarus in the Bible. The story goes - after the death of Lazarus, Jesus spoke to his disciples and said - (John 11:11)

"Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go and wake him up".

All Jesus was relating to his disciples is that Lazarus has died. This is evidenced by what Lazarus's sister, Martha, said to Jesus, when Jesus enquired about where they have buried him. She explained to the Lord that since he is already buried for four days, there is already bad odour in the grave. When Jesus spoke of Lazarus who had fallen asleep, he used euphemism.

4.4.6 Symbolism

Symbolism achieves exceptional richness of meaning. It remains an important force of art today. Machaka has successfully made good use of this technique in his elegies.

Explaining symbol Simpson, L. says:

... a symbol is an image that stands not only for itself but for something else as well, and perhaps many things. Part of the meaning of a symbol is emotional ... A symbol is often a means of making concrete and perceptible a meaning that otherwise would remain inexpressible. It is a loaded word or image from which meanings ray out, the meanings are determined by the context in which symbol appears. A symbol may be an object, a situation, a character ...

(Simpson 1972:458)

In short, a symbol as defined by J. Chiari is

a form of indirect, metaphorical speech meant to carry or to suggest a hidden reality.

(Chiari 1956:47)

For the object to be a symbol, therefore, it must have independent identity. It must be the object taken from nature that evokes mysterious associations. When using symbolism Machaka says:

- (a) *Leeba le lešweu le ile badimong!*
(Machaka 1967:7)
(A white dove has gone to heaven!)

The dove symbolises Kgarahara. He likens him with a white dove because he was a peace-loving king. A white dove is a well-known symbol of peace.

- (a) *Sepela botse, wena leru le le tletšeng lerato.*
(Machaka 1967:6)
(Go well you cloud full of love)

Machaka, here likens Kgarahara with the cloud. He is full of love. It is always our African hope that whenever we see clouds, we think of rain. Rain to us is life because it gives us water, so that we can be in a position to plough and get crops to keep us alive. To the Batlokwa nation, Kgarahara was just everything that brought life. He did everything good he could for his subjects.

4.4.7 Hyperbole

This figure of speech as defined by Gray, M. means

emphasis by exaggeration.

(Gray 1984:101)

Machaka successfully made good use of it. About the mourning of the Batlokwa for Kgoši Kgarahara Machaka, the poet says:

Mahlodi a Botlokwa a tletše noka!

(Machaka 1981:5)

(Botlokwa tears have filled the river!)

This he repeats in *Lehu la Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa* thus

Mononong e tletše mahlodi.

(Machaka 1981:110)

(Dwarsriver is full of tears)

One cannot imagine Botlokwa's local river Mononong, (Dwarsriver) filled by Batlokwa's tears. In *Lehu la Kgoši Kgarahara Machaka*, the poet says

Gobane Batlokwa ba ile ba hlahlamola lohle

Mahlodi a bona a thapiša kgoro ya mošate marega.

(Machaka 1981:10)

(Because Batlokwa attended the funeral in numbers
Their tears made the chief's kraal wet in winter).

It is true that hyperbole is emphasis by exaggeration, because there is no amount of tears that can make a place wet. This is just to emphasise the intensity of the pain that the Batlokwa felt, which they showed by attending the funeral in large numbers.

When describing the scene of the train accident in *Botlokwa kwa bo Faletše*, the poet says:

Pula ya madi e nele marega faseng la Matebele

.....
Ona a thapiša mabu a tsenelela le maswikeng.

(Machaka 1981:45)

(Blood rain fell in Winter at the land of Matebele

.....
.....
It drenched the soil and penetrated the stones).

This hyperbole explains the amount of blood that was at the scene of the accident. Indeed, if one were to think of the blood at the scene where eighteen people died and several injured, the poet succeeded in giving us the idea of blood that spilled over a wide area. Blood which penetrated the stones and made them wet!, a real emphasis by exaggeration.

Death is one thing that we cannot control. It evokes in us the most unbelievable anxieties of vulnerability. We are only thankful that the human spirit has the power of recuperating quickly. The people have courage to carry on living and to grow again, after the death of someone dear to them.

Even after the death of all the mine-workers in Coalbrook mine, whereupon hearing the disaster.

Sello sa pipa mašata a diphefo le meetse.

(Machaka 1981:107)

(The mourning covered the noise of wind and water).

When Kgoši Masedi departed, everything in Botlokwa mourned. This is evidenced in the lines that follow:

*Kgoši Masedi ga a llelwa ke batho le diruiwa,
Dihlare le maswika a Botlokwa re bone a lla.*

(Machaka 1981:108)

(Kgoši Masedi was not only mourned by people and animals.
Botlokwa trees and stones also mourned).

Surely a king who is mourned by all the universe, should have been a King who protected his nation, and looked well after it. Life and life's experiences do not prepare us for the time when we shall be alone. Alone as a nation, in the psychological sense or alone in bereavement, because no one feels the pain that the Batlokwa feel. Only they alone, know the desperate grief.

In the poem *Lehu la Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa*, the poet's exaggeration is stated as follows:

*O reng Makgato Tau ya Boberwa o re hlodia?
Sello sago re kwele se šikinya Mabjaneng;
Ga o a lla wena fela o tladišwe ke diphoofolo,*
(Machaka 1981:113)

(Why Makgato Tau of Boberwa do you break our hearts?
Your mourning shook Mabjaneng;
You didn't mourn alone, animals also mourned).

Machaka has, through the usage of hyperbole succeeded in expressing sorrow felt by Batlokwa for the loss of their faithful departed kings and relatives. It is also his wish on behalf of his nation that their souls may rest in peace. He has succeeded in heightening the effect.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we critically analysed Machaka's elegiac poems. We showed how he uses metre in his poems. We also showed how he constructed his stanzas together with how he uses this style to good effect. With the usage of imagery in his elegies, Machaka's most moving poems are rich in expression. His diction is pregnant with illuminating substance. His poetry is pleasant and rewarding to read because it is well written.

CHAPTER 5

5. LOVE

5.1 Introduction

Love is a subject that we all talk and read a lot about. Throughout history, poets have written about love and what it means to be in love. In fact, as far back as the sixteenth century, there was a special type of poem used for love poetry. This is called a sonnet. It is 14 lines long and is written as a single stanza. These days love is the subject of poems, books, TV and radio programmes. So much has been written about love and what it means to be in love.

Love poetry is literally a collection of flowers and figuratively a collection of beautiful passages of literature or a collection of notable poems. In this chapter, we will deal with a collection of notable poems. Notable because they speak of various types of love. Though there are various types of love, we in this chapter, shall deal mostly with lovers' love. It will, however, be noticed that Machaka expresses his personal love towards his beloved mistresses.

We have already stated that love poems seem to be common to many ages and societies. In the olden days, societies throughout, used music for their social - activities; love included. Speaking of the universal use of music, Merriam says

When we speak of the uses of music, we are referring to the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music, either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities.

(Merriam A.P. 1964:210)

Though Machaka's poetry is not lyrical, it should be borne in mind that it emanates from music; because African traditional literature is oral and is the product of communal activity, whereas work of modern literature, like Machaka's, is the result of individual effort.

Machaka is a great Northern Sotho love poet. He has written some of the most moving and durable verses of our time. Undoubtedly, Machaka's love poems are most well known. He has tried to embody in verse the real true love in him.

When defining the word love, **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English** (1974:505) says:

affection and tender devotion.

In his love poems Machaka reveals vividly his feelings. This he does successfully through his diction. The feelings that he expresses have the power to move the reader.

In his love poems he reveals the truth and only the truth of true love. This appears in all his four books in the poems that deal with the theme of love. From his very first book *Mehlodi ya Polelo*, we hear him confessing the truth of love. As his love poems are treated, it shall be discovered that the manner in which he presents his matter reveals the truth found in each love poem.

Generally, the poet is not bound to present bare facts in his poems. His duty should be to present to us his message. He must convince us through his arguments and proofs of what he tells us. Many people think that art, like in poetry should be a detailed and correct presentation of life. This is surely not so, for if it were so, then the aim of art would be easily achieved.

Instead of painting a picture one needs only to take a photograph of some objects. Machaka in his love poems has given a meticulous description of his loved ones. In this manner, we see his creative spirit. He has left the task of painting to the readers to comment. The poet being a part of real life, comments not on life as it is, but on the experience he gains from life. It is not merely a report on experience but it is experience viewed and assessed by a beholder.

The poet should suggest and not state. To state a thing is to suppress three quarters of the joy of a poem, which consists of guessing, little by little. Suggestion makes the dream.

Our main aim in Machaka's love poems therefore is to reveal the truth of the photo. In the second book, **Therešo**, he speaks of the truth being the root of all the Batlokwa - and truly speaking, the truth does not only lie among the Batlokwa but is also found in all mankind. A matured adult knows what the truth is - just like when he is in a position to distinguish between darkness and light as well as between good and bad.

Machaka's loved ones are real people. What he says about them also touches human hearts through the ages. We find an image of ourselves in his poems which lead to contemplation of oneself and of human nature in general. In this manner, we are moved emotionally and we tend to accentuate our experiences and give perspective to our contemplation of life.

5.2 *Naledi*: Machaka 1981

Before the first poem of this book is treated, the researcher would like to unravel the core of the poet's problem. In Western Society, marriage is primarily an agreement between two persons, who have decided to contract a legal relationship, which may or may not be connected in some special way with religion. It is only when both parties are of the right age, that they may enter into marriage, without the consent of their nearest relations.

Whereas in the case of South African Blacks, marriage primarily and traditionally is a matter between two families, namely the bridegroom's family on the one hand and the bride's family on the other. Only certain persons though, are allowed to marry each other. Persons who are closely related, namely brothers and sisters, parents and children are prohibited to marry one another. An abhorrence of incest exists.

In the case of Northern Sotho people, therefore, crosscousin marriage is the most preferred. At times, the boy may even have a girl assigned to him whom he will be obliged to marry when he has grown up.

5.2.1 *Naledi*: (1981:24-37)

From the look of things, the Batlokwa tribe is also endogamous. A marriage outside related persons is strictly prohibited and the arrangement is strictly upheld. This is where the core of the complaint lies. The poet's people object to the marriage of their son outside home country because to them, such a marriage is taboo. They are surprised by their son who pretends not to know,

Bophelo bja Motlokwa bo Motlokweng.

(Machaka 1981:9)

(Motlokwa's life lies in a Motlokwa)

Unfortunately with them, their son became headstrong against this custom. He ends up marrying exogamously, a maiden of his choice. After getting permission that he may marry in that fashion, he triumphantly thanks God, saying:

*Tumišo ga e be go Wena, Tate wa magodimong,
Diletšo di goeletše lefaseng le legodimong,
Ka thato ya Gago o mphile Naledi ya Sebaibai,
Nna ke mo fase ka matolo bošego le mosegare,
Ke re ka thato ya Gago lerato leo ga le keke,
Le rotoge mo fase le tsene mo go dutšeng Jesu.
O Modimo! nošetša lerato leo ka meetselerato, ...*

(Machaka 1981:36)

(Praise be to You, Father in Heaven,
Musical instruments must sound on earth and heaven,
In Your will, you gave me the glittering star,
I am down on my knees day and night,
God willing, our love will grow,
Until it enters into Your Kingdom.
O God! irrigate our love with love water, ...)

It is evident that when Machaka uttered this statement, he was very excited. Happy because he has succeeded in convincing his people that it is possible to marry exogamously. He is happy because he has managed to strike relationship between his people and his bride's people, the marriage relationship which has increased the Batlokwa tribe. The Tlhekwe-tribe and the Batlokwa are now affinal. They will respect each other, love one another and live harmoniously together. These two tribes are no longer going to look down upon each other, because they are now related.

What the poet did, according to the poem, shows how deeply he loved Naledi. It is always said that deeds speak louder than words. This is proved by the poet saying

*Ke boletše le Batlokwa pula e tšokotletša,
Ka buša ka ba kgobaketša ka fase ga moriti,
Ga ba ka ba rata go kwa le go kwešiša Therešo,
Nna ga ke a lapa, ke ba biditše go tuka mollo,
Ba kgobokane bešong sa marega ka šupa lebaka,
Ka ba bontšha Therešo dipelo tša phurologa.*

(Machaka 1981:9)

(I talked to Batlokwa rain falling heavily,
I gathered them again under a shadow,
They did not want to hear and understand the Truth,
I did not tire, I called them fire burning,
They gathered around winter fire, I gave them reasons,
I showed them the Truth and their hearts were gratified).

As one reads this stanza - one gets a picture of this poor young man who untiringly went up and down. He convened meeting after meeting with his relatives, trying to prove to them that there is nothing wrong with love outside home country. And from what we gather in this stanza is that the struggle was not transient. He talked to them about this issue on a rainy day. He convened another meeting on a hot day because it is said, they were seated under a tree. He did not succeed until he called yet another meeting in winter where they had gathered around the winter fire. Fortunately, it is at this third round table meeting where they permitted him to marry his chosen bride.

Machaka convened meeting after meeting with his relatives trying to persuade and prove to them that there is nothing wrong with love outside the poet's country. He went through thick and thin. All the time he was optimistic until at the end they allowed him to do as he wished.

As Machaka persuades his relatives to permit him to marry a maiden of his choice, one wonders why love should be forbidden. Why should a passion struggle against impossibilities? Love is so strong, it should be able to endure the end of time. Love should be allowed to grow, to flourish into something tender and lasting.

Not only did the poet plead with his living kinship but he went on to the extent of pleading with his late father, hence,

*Papa, mpulele monyako wa bahu re bolele,
Ke go botše seo se mmetšeng letswalong;
.....
Tseba Papa, ke šatogile mahlong le pelong.
Ke lahlile kgadi ya Sekoto sa Mmapela!*
(Machaka 1981:22)

(Father, open for me the grave door so that we talk,
So as to tell you what's in me;
.....
Know Father, that I have changed facially and in mind.
I no longer love the Mmapela maiden!)

What Machaka does, by talking to his late father, is an expression of his love for Naledi. One is aware of the electrified atmosphere which surrounded him. He feels completely lost and cared not, where the drifting tide might carry him. He felt as if a powerful magnet was pulling him from what he ardently wished to have.

Machaka tried by all means to show his gods how deeply he is involved with this Tlhekwe maiden, thus

*Ke kgopela badimo gore le mpulele difate,
Gobane moyeng wa ka go khukhušitše lerato:*

*Medi ya lona e pharotše le magakabje,
E tshetše dinoka ya nabalala le meboti;
Ya phirimelwa seleteng sa gaNkokonyane,
Mo Naledi a nnwešitšeng meetse a lerato.*

(Machaka 1981:22)

(I request the gods to open the gates for me,
Because in my spirit a new love has blossomed;
Its roots have cracked the rocks,
It has crossed the rivers and hills;
And it was belated at Nkokonyane's place,
Where Naledi has made me drink waters of love).

What the poet is saying is a clear testimony to his intense love for Naledi. Love is always more powerful than reason. Machaka has already realised that he has fallen in love. Never before had a woman touched his heart with such intensity that the poet's love for Naledi has become so passionate and possessive.

It is exhilarating to notice that even the gods have granted him permission to marry Naledi. Given permission to marry her, Machaka felt relieved, as if he had shed a burden from his shoulders; a load which had become too heavy for him to bear alone.

One can visualise the brightening up of his face after being given permission to get married to Naledi. One also imagines the cord of tension which stood out on his neck, relaxing. He became so excited that he even went to the extent of addressing his in-laws. He explains to them the advantage of his marriage to their daughter in this vein;

*Boya-kgomo ke boboya-kgomo lena Batlhekwe,
Naledi o tla lela kgadi ya go tšwa Bophirima,
Yona e tla lotola lešaba la lena la thakgala,
La phumula mahlodi a llang mmamma, Naledi;
Modimo, godiša lethatše la Naledi le kgwahle,
Selaelo a yo bjala Therešo kua Batlhekwen.*

(Machaka 1981:10)

(What has been given to one is what one must give
one's benefactor you Batlhekwe,
Naledi will nurse the maiden from the West,
She will in turn nurture your kin and you will be happy,
She will wipe tears that cry for mother Naledi;

God, let Naledi's first born grow and be strong,
Selaelo must go and sow the Truth at Batlhekwe).

Machaka says this because Naledi is his senior wife. According to the Batlokwa custom, because of Naledi's status, after her wedding, the whole tribe must go and kindle their fire from her kitchen. As it is said in Northern Sotho - *Naledi ke timamello* (Naledi is the principal wife).

Secondly, she is going to bear a girl who must marry her brother's son. By so doing, as it is said in Northern Sotho - *Dikgomo di boela šakeng* - which means beasts which came from the bridegroom's father's kraal as magadi for her (Naledi), must go back to the bridegroom's place as magadi for the daughter (Selaelo).

God has given the young man a wife. He is thankful. He must in turn look well after her. He also thanks God who made it possible for him to overcome at last, love struggling against people. One wonders why love should be forbidden. After overcoming his struggle, there was in his face, a message of joy and thanksgiving. It is our wish and prayer that it be sweet and lasting if it is left to blossom.

The young man compares the beauty of his beloved with a shining star. The use of this imagery gives us a vivid picture of Naledi. Naledi brought light to Botlokwa. The poet also compares their love with the love of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. By so saying, he is telling us that their love is not wavering but true love which will withstand earthly problems. Of course, in all these, he requests the Lord God to be with him. This still proves the depth of Machaka's Christianity.

Machaka has become the slave to his beloved. He likens his lover's beauty and neatness to a butterfly. He is actually surprised by those who do not see beauty and love in Naledi, people like his mother. The poet is undoubtedly and irresistibly attracted to Naledi in a manner not seen before. This is proved by the following excerpts:

*Mma o se be manyaming, ke le lethabong;
 Emelela o tsholetše mollwane wa tlhonamo,
 O dule le ngwetši yago bešong sa thatano,
 Gobane Naledi o tla go bea boreleding,
 Mo ngwetši-ngwetši e beang mmatswale;
 Botša Batlokwa ke hweditše serurubele;
 Nna le ngwana wa Lekubu re kgoramelane;
 Yo a sa rateng yena le nna a nkatologe,
 Nna le yena re ka se orišane mollo.*

(Machaka 1981:23)

(Mother, do not be sad while I am happy;
 Stand up and cross the despair boundary,
 Stay with your daughter-in-law around love fire-place,
 Because Naledi will treat you well,
 Like a real daughter-in-law treating a mother-in-law;
 Tell the Batlokwa that I have found a butterfly;
 Me and a Lekubu child are one;
 Who doesn't love her must keep aloof from me;
 Me and him will not be friends).

As stated earlier, Machaka's love poems are his own love experiences. When one reads them, one is faced with the truth of real love. He sounds so trapped in love for Naledi that he cannot even come to his senses. His mother's behaviour would be telling him a story if he were sober. The reaction of the old lady shows that she is not happy with her son's exogamous marriage. She does not seem to be freely welcoming her daughter-in-law. But because the poet is so trapped in love, he does not realise this. He is so trapped that one feels the strength of his love to his beloved is like a magnet. He has become a slave to his beloved. Naledi's bright light shines and covers the poet and he in turn becomes the light just like her. This view is expressed in the following lines:

*Letšang sephalangwedi kiba le mekgolokwane,
 Ruri ngwana wa Lekubu o goditše pelong ya ka,
 Yena o mpeile sebešong sa maratetšo a lerato;
 E nthekgile natshwana ke šitwa go šišinyega.*

(Machaka 1981:23)

(Beat the drums and ululate,
 Lekubu's child has kindled in my heart,
 She has put me on a love fireplace;
 She is supporting me I cannot move).

Machaka's wish is that everybody should know the love he has for Naledi because in the preceding stanza he invites people to beat drums and ululate. He invites them to celebrate with him. At this celebration he will introduce Naledi to those who do not know her. He is so much in love that he cannot think of or concentrate on anything except Naledi. He is hooked to Naledi.

In defining this type of love Peck and Coyle state that it is the type in which

The lover is a knight who worships his lady ... he sighs,
weeps and prays for her with burning desire, pledging
eternal faithfulness. She however, is representing
everything good in life.

(Peck and Coyle 1984:25)

To Machaka, love is regarded as an unfolding potentiality and a life enhancing experience. This is proved by what he says -

Ntheeletše tshehlana ya leswao la kwešišo!
Mpatamele ke go botše ditšwamafahleng -
Naledi go nna ke mohlodi sediba-sa-lerato, ...

(Machaka 1981:23)

(Listen to me the light complexioned one with the sign
of understanding!
Come nearer me so that I tell you my innermost feeling
Naledi to me is a well-of-love, ...)

The Machaka's love poems are not a mere juggling with words, but poems of love in the truest sense of the word. His depiction of love in his poems is something beyond temporal existence. His love suggests a union of heart and mind, the love that is able to unravel mystery. The nature of love he is speaking about, is Godly. For the lovers to reach this state of love implies that shedding of the temporal nature and the attainment of the ultimate good which suggests Godliness.

The language used by Machaka in his love poetry can rightfully be explained as the language of the heart which is regarded as seat of emotions. Machaka's poems succeed in arousing his reader's emotions.

5.3 THEREŠO (Machaka, 1981)

5.3.1 Therešo: 9-10

Still speaking about the same lover, in *Therešo*, the poet explains to his people that the maiden he intends marrying will look well after them. This he says in these words:

*Thakgalang, Babinankwe, le sehlageng sa totolo,
Naledi o swere thari ya khutšo, batamelang;
Ka yona o tla le phutha la phadima lefaseng;
Ka yona o tla bontšha selete sa lena kopano,
Ka yona o tla le tšhotšholela go Mophološi,
Setshwaseedi ke Therešo ya lena ya kholofelo.*
(Machaka 1981:9)

(Rejoice, you who consider the tiger as your totem, you are protected,
Naledi has the abba-skin of peace, come nearer;
With it she will cover you and you'll shine on earth,
With it she will unite you,
With it she will take you to the Saviour,
Setshwaseedi is your Truth of hope).

It's true that through marriage nations become related; they respect each other and become one. History has taught us that in the olden days, when exogamous marriage was still a taboo, there was hatred, disrespect, war and many other bad things among the tribes. This has come to an end and thanks to the intermarriages among the various tribes.

One might ask the question, who combines lovers? The truth is one; a life partner is a gift from God. God has made it that way that two people share the passion of love and mutual understanding, build lasting bonds of respect through tenderness and affection,

turn a mere romance into a deep interpersonal and emotional experience. This is also evidenced by Ecclesiastes which reads,

Two are better than one because they have a good
reward, for their labour. For if they fall, the one
will lift up his fellow ...

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

5.3.2 *Setshwaseedi* (13-14)

Every man and every woman pray for one thing in life - that their love should never shake and that it be honest love. That is the truth that Machaka is praying for as he says:

*Modimo, khunela lerato la ka ka lehuto-kgomo,
Ge ke sa phela nketetše le yena Setshwaseedi,
Mohla re tlogang mo re hlakane go Wena Tate,
Dithaba di ka boela, lerato la rena le dule,
Meedi e ka rotoga ya ba meboto, O se e robe,
Modimo thekga lerato la ka ka therešo le tumelo.*

(Machaka 1981:14)

(God, fasten our love with a reefknot,
If I am still alive, lead me and Setshwaseedi,
The day we depart here, let's meet at You Father,
Mountains may disappear but our love should stand,
Valleys can become hills, but let our love not break,
God, support my love with truth and faith).

This is Machaka's solemn prayer for the bond between him and his beloved. He is greatly attracted to Setshwaseedi, attracted in a way that he had never been to any woman before. Never had a woman touched his heart before with such sincerity and possessiveness mixed with passion. No one ever falls in love purposely; it just happens. It is a spontaneous action.

We find here Machaka having succeeded in creating the impression of sincerity. The feelings that he expresses have the power to move the reader. These words express the emotions of a lover to his lady. While saying all these, his mind is in a turmoil and his heart is aching unbearably and beats frantically.

In the three love poems we have treated so far in this chapter, the poet expresses his love for one person. He so dearly loves her that he calls her by various names. There are still other poems which we did not treat; poems that still praise Naledi.

There are also other love poems in these books where the poet expresses love for other maidens. Machaka chooses his words to tell us about the way he loves.

In the next phase, we come across love poems where the poet starts by informing his audience about where his beloved comes from.

5.4 *MEHLODI YA POLELO* (1971)

5.4.1 *Mokgadi* (26-28)

With the words that he utters, he shows a genuine tenderness of love for Mokgadi. As one reads the poem, one realises that it is the poet's first love experience. He has fallen deeply in love with her, that he even declares openly

Tsebang Mokgadi ke yena setlapane pelong ya ka.
(Machaka 1971:26)

Know that Mokgadi has bewitched my heart).

The poet tells the world that Mokgadi has bewitched him. He describes Mokgadi's beauty which has enchanted him. He cannot resist loving her.

Ke e bone kgaetšedi ya Matongwana -
Yona ya ntanya ka botse bjo e bo rweleng,
Bjo bo šitišang dikgogo go fata dithete,
Botse bja go šutiša dithaba tša BoSeiphi.
Mokgadi, o pheta ya mollwa pelong ya ka.
(Machaka 1971:27)

(I saw Matongwana's sister -
She captured me by her beauty,
Which hinders chickens to look for worms,

Beauty which moves Seiphi's mountains.
Mokgadi, you are a precious necklace in my heart).

Machaka has the art of using the best words in the best order when he praises those that he loves. He might be exaggerating, but he has a talent of presenting his message to his readers. One ends up having a vivid picture of the person he is writing about. However, the poet has failed to describe the built of Mokgadi, he doesn't give us her physical appearance. All that he emphasises is her beauty and her light complexion. We are therefore given only her silhouette. He confesses to this maiden that,

*O a ntseba ke mohloli naledi ya Malema!
Fela ke go file mpho ya go feta tšohle,
Morwedi wa Kgoale ke mo abetše lerato la ka.*
(Machaka 1971:28)

(You know me I am poor you star of Malema!
But I have given you the biggest present,
Kgoale's daughter I've given my love to you).

It is unfortunate that we lack Mokgadi's response to this offer. This arouses in the reader a sympathetic feeling for the poet as it would seem there is a possibility of rejection of his love by Mokgadi. But such is his enthusiasm that surely only a maiden with the heart of stone could turn such a loving lover down.

5.4.2 *Phuti* (40-42)

This is another poem where Machaka's theme is love and not beauty. Like in the preceding poem, he writes about his love for Phuti, and there is nowhere, where he describes her beauty. He says:

*Ona a ntšhireleditše tlaleng ya lerato,
A nteletše Phuti, naledi ya pelo ya ka.
Ke be ke sa tsebe molodi wa leratorato, ...*
(Machaka 1971:40)

(It has protected me against love hunger,
It took care of Phuti, my heart's star.
I did not know real love then, ...)

From the above extract, the poet reveals to the reader real love that he has for Phuti. His love for her makes him spend sleepless nights. He goes on to say:

*Pelo ge e rera ga e robale Bahwaduba,
E bjalo ka motsomi a theile dinare,
Mpatamele o mphumole dikeledi moratiwa!
O ntlhapiše ka matsogo a rweleng lerato,
La ka go wena le šišinya Makgabeng.*

(Machaka 1971:40)

(An occupied mind doesn't rest Bahwaduba,
It's like a hunter who has put snares for a buffalo,
Come nearer me and wipe my tears my beloved!
Wash me with loving hands,
Mine (love) to you sets the Makgabeng shaking).

The poet has various artistic and impressive ways of telling the world about his love for Phuti.

When proposing love to Phuti, the poet does it in a very dramatic manner. It is as if he has been speaking face to face with Phuti on the stage

*Sebata se dumediša wena phoofolo!
Nkwe e re Kgomo mpulele sefeko ke tsene, ...*

(Machaka 1971:41)

(Beast greets you animal!
Tiger says Buffalo open the gate so that I enter, ...)

This is an exceptional presentation. Even if Phuti's response is absent from the poem, we as listeners have a feeling that her response has been positive.

He has instinctive overflow of great feelings. He has the art of speaking directly to our feelings and our imaginations. He tells the world of the repercussions of not having Phuti in a very clear and loud voice. He therefore, leaves us with no doubt of what he has said. He continues to express his feelings in a sad tone in the lines that follow:

*Ka se hwetše yena ke tla ja molatša;
Ke tla bitšwa mošemanyana leleduleputswa;
Gomme ka tsena le bokgope lebitleng;
Gobane kgato ya bobedi nka se e gate.*

(Machaka 1971:42)

(Failing to get her I will eat cold porridge;
I will be called a grey - bearded boy;
And be buried being a bachelor;
Because the second step I will not take).

The poet has taken a painful decision. He chooses to be a bachelor for the rest of his life, if Phuti rejects his proposal. He prefers to die a bachelor. Though this decision is harsh to us who are spectators, I presume the speaker took this stand because he loves Phuti wholeheartedly. To him, there is no other person that he will ever love more than Phuti.

It is always said that one should never say never. The speaker's words are not yet cold but we hear him changing his mind. Something drastic makes him change his mind. The preceding assertion will be supported when we examine the following poem:

5.4.3 *Nomawi* (35-37)

There is an English idiomatic expression which goes - wise men change their minds. We therefore do not accuse the poet when he informs us that he has changed his mind. When he told us of the love that he had for Phuti, we thought he was telling the truth. Upon reading this poem, Nomawi, one realises that, he took a decision of marrying Phuti too early, before he knew places. Hence this confession:

*Ge ke sa le Senwabarwana ke be ke foufetše,
Ke gopola gore lefase le goma gaRaphahlele,
Ge e le Bodikela le fihla kua Makgabeng -
Ka mo Leboa le kuba gaRamapulana dithabeng -
Leoto le ntšere la ntsentšha kua Xhoseng;
Ka bona natshehlana ya mahlo a go bilogana,
Ngwana yo mose wa lehlaga tebatša, Nomawi.*

(Machaka 1971:36)

(When I was still at Bochum, I was blind,
I thought the earth ended at Raphahlele,
In the West, it ended at Makgabeng -
In the North it ended at Ha-Ramabulana on mountains
I went to Xhosaland/Transkei;
I saw a light complexioned maiden with rolling eyes,
A slender lass with a long chin, Nomawi).

Unlike Mokgadi and Phuti, the poet here gives the reader the physical make-up of the lass that has a delicate physique, the beauty from Xhosaland. Slender in built with bright rolling eyes. That is Nomawi.

From the statement one can deduce that Mokgadi was the young man's first beloved lady. Being a young man, upon seeing Mokgadi, he thought she was the only one. He forgot the idiomatic expression which goes - *Sogana le sa etego le tla tšea kgaetšedi le re makgarebe a fedile* (a young man who does not go places will end up marrying his own sister thinking that there are no more ladies). That is why upon visiting Transkei and meeting Nomawi he started to think otherwise about Mokgadi.

After making the statement about the most beautiful girl that the young man met in Transkei, it is as if he paused a little to allow the listeners to assimilate the full emotional content of his words. Yes, quite definitely. The lass that he has seen - has dazzled him:

*Gobane yo ke mmoneng o ntsene ditšhikeng,
O bopegile ngwana o phala le maloba a naga.*
(Machaka 1971:36)

(Because the one that I've seen has got into my blood
vessels,
She is beautiful - fairer than wild flowers).

According to the poet, she has the most gentle nature, the most sweet and loving disposition. This time, the poet speaks about beauty of the lass he has met as compared to the love he had for Phuti. Nowhere in Phuti's poem do we come across a statement where the poet speaks of her beauty.

There is a simile which goes as beautiful as a flower. Here the poet tells us that Nomawi is more beautiful than a flower. She must be beautiful indeed! This statement tells us everything about her. She is an ideal woman. The poet has a reason for rejecting Phuti - surely such beauty can make any normal person to change his mind.

As listeners to the young man's pleas, we yield when he requests his relatives to allow him to reject Mokgadi and get married to Nomawi. He is deeply involved. He says to them:

*Ge nkabe le mo tseba le ka ntokolla,
Gobane yo mo bjalo ga le ešo la mmona,
Bao ba mo tsebang ba re o homotša balli,
Wa mo lebelela masetlapelo a go katologa.
Ke e bone nonyana e phaswana ka hlanama,
Mahlo a yona a ntshwere a nkakatletše -
Ke bjalo ka phuti e tateditšwe ke hlware.*

(Machaka 1971:36)

(You would release me if you knew her,
Because you have never seen someone like her,
Those who know her say, she consoles the mourners,
Looking at her, sorrow fades away.
I saw a pied bird and changed my mind,
Its eyes have ensnared me -
I am like a buck which is caught by a python).

This stanza sums up everything in this poem. It shows how deeply he loves Nomawi. He has succeeded in giving us the picture of Nomawi, with the overt emphasis on her beauty. I have the feeling that when he tells the world about Nomawi, he melts inwardly and his pulse changes because he speaks about someone he loves so dearly. The poet reveals the pain of the pleasure of being in love. He uses his art of automatic powerful feelings; taking its origin from emotions recollected in an undisturbed mind.

The young man's love for Nomawi has disturbed his peace of mind. His appreciation of her high conical breasts and her eyebrows reveals a picture of irresistible beauty. The following lines are sufficient testimony:

Mo le mpona fela mmele, mogopolo o Xhoseng.

.....

Ke a e rata kgadi ya letswele la go ema,

Dintshi tša gagwe ke di lebeletše ka hlanama.

Ka re Batlokwa tšeang wa lena le ntokolleng.

(Machaka 1971:37)

(Here you see only my body, my mind is in Transkei,

.....

I love her, the lass with high conical breasts,

I looked at her eyebrows and changed my mind.

And said Batlokwa take your child and release me).

According to the description of the maiden's breast, one imagines that her breasts were fully ripe, the best he has ever seen in his life. He says nothing about her smile. I presume it is not that she doesn't have a striking smile. She also has seductive eyes and is full of sensuous lips. Together with her breast it is her endless eyebrows that melt the young man's heart at a single glance. She has an irresistible charisma. She is the lass the young man wants to settle down with and live happily ever after.

5.4.4 *Theeletša Mokgadi* (47-48)

What we gather in this poem is that the gentleman in question, went against the customs of his people by rejecting Mokgadi who is his blood cousin, and married Nomawi. This he did without the approval and blessings of his parents, which is evidenced by the first stanza of this poem:

Ke rile ke ya Xhoseng la nganga;

La mpotša nnete ka e lahlela kgole,

Gobane bošemanane bo be bo nkakatletše,

Bo mpeile mahlong a ngwana wa Lekubu:

Yo botse bjagwe bo phalang dinonyana,

Nomawi setswatswa se hlokanang lekgohlo,

Ke be ke mo rapela e le modingwana wa ka.

(Machaka 1971:47)

(When I wanted to go to Transkei you argued;
You told me the truth but I rejected it,
Because I was still entangled in boyhood,
I was trapped by the Nguni child:
Whose beauty is better than that of birds,
Nomawi the unblemished and the beautiful,
I was worshipping her she was my idol).

The young man confesses that he was obstinate because he was still immature, and did not understand the advice of the parents then. He was so much in love with Nomawi that he could not think properly. The poet like all creatures is endowed with feelings and emotions within circumstantial whole wherein he must perforce, find means and ways of expressing his deep-seated desires. In his case, it is the need to love and be loved. He loved Nomawi above everything. To him Nomawi was going to be a companion and a helper in life. As one reads this poem, one thinks about creation, that God has created the world, and it was good. Then he made man, and man was good. He then made a woman, and ... well, as we all know, woman was not so good.

Though not all women are bad, it is human to remember the deeds of Eve, when we read the last two lines of the second stanza,

*Mma le papa ba mphile naka ya mokhure,
Ke rile ke tla e letša e ya ntetša.*

(Machaka 1971:47)

(Mother and father gave me the pipe of a castor oil
plant,
I thought I would play it but it makes me cry).

This gives us the impression that the poet was disappointed by the person he thought to be his beloved, his companion and helper in life until death do them part. The preceding lines tell us a story of disappointment. Things did not go the way he thought they would go. He truly acknowledges that he has bitten into a tempting sweet apple and swallowed before he realised it was rotten. Hence we hear him apologising and confessing to his people and his gods.

*Ntshwareleng Batlokwa ke šaeditše,
Ke sepetše tsela ka thoko ka timela,
Fela badimo ga ba ntahlela sa ruri,
Ba rile mo go sa boelwego ke teng.*

(Machaka 1971:47)

(Forgive me Batlokwa I have erred,
I walked at the side of a road and went astray,
But the gods did not forsake me,
They said it is only inside where one cannot go back
to).

It is just a pity that pride always comes before a fall. Had he listened to his parents when he was warned against exogamous marriage, he would not have met this disappointment. On the other hand, we feel for him because when one is in love, one becomes blind. One cannot even think properly. The gentleman in question acknowledges this -

*Gobane ke be ke mo latela le mo a emego,
Gape ke sepela mo a beang kgato mabung,*

(Machaka 1971:47)

(Because I used to follow her even where she stood,
And walked in her footprints).

He was a slave in love. A normal thinking person could not behave the way he did. He did this because he was in the slavery of love. Nomawi pulled him into captivity. A dangerous magnetic attraction seemed ever present. It was very strong and it was something he wanted and needed because he wanted to have Nomawi. His heart was in a turmoil and it was aching unbearably because of the love he had for Nomawi. He had fallen hopelessly in love with her. It is just unfortunate that things turned out against him.

5.4.5 *Lerato* (77-78)

Another fascinating type of love that the poet addresses in this poem is the search for an explanation from lovers, what love is.

*Lerato ke eng lena baratani le ratanang?
Re gakanegile re ntšheng leswiswing.
Ke mang yo a tsebang ntlha ya lerato!
Lefase le re file dihlalefi tše dintši;
Le paletšwe go re fa motsebi-wa-lerato.*

(Machaka 1971:77)

(What is love you lovers in love?
We are confused enlighten us,
Who knows the tip of love!
The world has given us many wise people;
But it could not give us one who knows what love is).

After posing the question to lovers on what love is, he comes back again to answer it. He tells us that the world failed to give us one who knows what love is. In other words, according to the poet, we who are God's creation do not know love because he says, love is a secret of the gods.

*Lerato ga re le tsebe ke thopa ya badimo,
Re tseba ge e le mpho ya monna le mosadi,
Modimo, ntime tša lefase, O se ntime lerato!
Lerato go baratani le fenyā le ona marega -
Selemo lerato ke motšhoretšaletšatši.*

(Machaka 1971:77)

(We do not know love, it is the secret of the gods,
We know it to be a gift of husband and wife.
God, deprive me of earthly things, but not love!
Love to lovers overcomes winter -
In summer love is sunprotector).

Love is a gift from God for husband and wife. It is sacred and it should not be made unholy. It must be respected and be given the tender care that it deserves. The poet points to us a very important fact which is ignored in most cases. He says to us -

*Lerato ke lerato ga le tle gabedi mothong.
.....
Lona ga le phumoge dipelong tša baratani.
Le le tšewang ke meboya ya lefase ga se lerato.*

(Machaka 1971:77)

(Love is love, does not come twice to a person,

.....
It does not fade in the lovers' hearts.

The one that is blown about by earthly winds
is not love).

The poet here is trying to discourage divorce. He is explaining to the people that God blesses the first marriage. Lovers' love therefore should be everlasting and should not tarnish. Marriage is expected to be life of everlasting happiness.

Most of the married couples still haven't discovered how to be happy, growing old with the people they have sworn to love until they die. If only it could be remembered that the key to happy matrimony is tolerance and mutual forgiveness of lovers' transgressions. It would be stating the obvious to say there is no formula for happy marriage: Practically everywhere we turn, there is just such a formula on offer: a holy man will tell you that marriage can only be truly meaningful when consummated in the presence of God. A marriage-guidance counsellor will tell you, it can never be lasting without the aid of trustworthy monogamy. In fact, all recipes are rules in one guise or another, and however much we might think we need rules in relationships, we also know that they can never be strictly adhered to indeed that the rules themselves may be as destructive as anarchy. For someone will say for love to last lovers must take time to know each other. They must not rush over marriage because it is not an overnight thing. The couple must live together until they are separated by God through death. The poet presents the theme of love in a very clear manner. He likens love to mountains which do not move:

Lerato le swana le dithaba ga le šutologe.

(Machaka 1971:78)

(Love is like mountains it does not shift).

The poet is trying to discourage people who are unfaithful. What he is emphasising in this poem is that a person should have only one lover. It is our hope and wish as a people that one day the world will accept and practise monogamy because it is only through it, coupled with faithfulness that marriages last forever.

5.4.6 *Lerato la Ngwana* (78-79)

So far we have spoken about love between lovers, the type of love found between two grown-ups. The marriage of lovers God made to last until death. We speak of death parting the partners not divorce because according to God's arrangement, what He God has combined, let no man separate.

In this poem, the poet writes about another type of love; child's love for the parents. In this poem, the speaker who is the child appreciates his parents' love for him:

*Batswadi ba nthatile ka leratorato,
Lona la go namela dilo ka mphela.
Ge ke ba bona khutšo e ntsena pelong;
Ka bolela nabo mahloko a nkatologa,
Lerato la mma le papa ke le legolo.*

(Machaka 1971:78)

(Parents loved me with real love,
Love that is above everything,
When I see them, there is peace in my heart,
When I talk to them all sadness disappears,
Mother and father's love is great).

It is encouraging to hear a child appreciating his parents' love because modern children lack appreciation. They hardly ever think of the pain that a parent endured in nurturing them.

The poet speaks of a child's love - the love at first touch which experts call bonding. Mothers have always known the power of the minutes and hours after birth. This period offers a special opportunity to promote what is called bonding or close enduring attachment. Caressing or touching a baby all over after birth is a mother's natural greeting, and one of the most powerful aspects of bonding.

In the special bond between father and his new-born child there is a combination of interest absorption and pre-occupation released by early contact. The reactions of fathers who are connected with their babies in that first critical hour support this view. During this period of bonding, one excited father said that he was so surprised to see his

baby-daughter looking around and gripping. And when he touched her, he felt suddenly that he did not just have a baby, he had a daughter. This bonding after birth proceeds spontaneously if mother/father and infant are together, because it is the opportune time for it.

I presume, it is such babies who go on to appreciate parental love and care:

Ke tsene lefaseng ke le segole,
Ka dula diatleng tša bothito le lerato.
Ke be ke le mofokodi gape ke le sefofu;
Mma le papa ba ntela tseleng ya lerato,
Ke bona badimo ba ka mo mohlaleng.
(Machaka 1977:79)

(I entered the world being a cripple,
I sat in the warm hands of love,
I was weak and blind;
Mother and father nurtured me with love,
They are my gods on this earth).

The child acknowledges the helpless manner in which he was born. The mother holding him stiffly like a bouquet of flowers. As the new mother holds her new arrival, there is more than relief, more than pleasure in the safe arrival of a healthy bouncing infant. Magical as it is, this swift getting-in-touch appears to produce prolonged benefits. The poet, on behalf of the child acknowledges all the tender care she received from birth, and for all that she gives thanks to the parents.

The child remembers with gratitude the tender care she received at all times while all was not well.

*Ke ba hlokišitše boroko mašego a mantši;
Ke nna ke ba sepeditšeng maeto a go baba.
Ke be ke sa tsebe go ipha ke fokola,
Mma a mpha letswele la mekgato ya lerato;
Ruri lerato la ka go batswadi le na le moya.*
(Machaka 1971:79)

(They spent many sleepless nights;
I made them undertake unpleasant trips.
I could not feed myself, I was weak,

Mother gave me milk of love from her breast;
Truly, my love for my parents is spiritual).

This proves that human beings are resilient and interact in many ways. Every parent and child is unique, so is the language of love between them.

The poet ends this poem with a moral to the child, thus:

*Ba theeletše mo mahlokong le lethabong,
Seo ba ilang go go fa e ka se be gauta -
Ba tla go abela botho bjo bo tletšeng.
Gomme o be motho yo a phethegileng.
Lerato la mma le papa le šutiša dithaba.*

(Machaka 1971:79)

(Listen to them in sadness and in happiness,
What they will give you though will not be gold -
They will give you kindness in abundance,
And you will be a complete person.
Mum and dad's love moves mountains).

A child with the above qualities will be a respectful adult. Respectful because he shall be well mannered, as the saying goes - manners maketh a man. It is only children who listen to their parents who will in turn bear mannered children.

The nurturing of a child gives a mother a high status in society. If one could think back, one would remember that all men, great and small, from all walks of life are born of woman. It is she, who has given birth to the child, nursed it in childhood and continues to care for him in adulthood. Who cannot thank such a person? Of course alone she would not manage, the father is always by her side.

5.5 STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Among the love poems that we have treated, only one has been selected for structural analysis. The reason for selecting only one poem is the fact that the pattern for all is the same. It should be noted however that the structural pattern constitutes a poem.

No matter how civilised we are, structure for Northern Sotho poetry can never be the same as that of foreign languages. We do acknowledge that here and there the stylistic forms have been greatly influenced. Any interference with the structure of any type of Northern Sotho poem, be it elegy, praise or love, affects the sense and the feelings expressed. Northern Sotho poetry is natural and self-sufficient and need no external embellishments.

Machaka ranks among the poets who have risen above the average standard of high quality poems. When analysing the poet's love poems we shall concentrate on the external form, the literal form of the language, the internal form as well as the figurative form of the language. The poem *Phuti*, (Mehlodi ya Polelo: 1971:40-42) will be analysed.

5.5.1 Metre

Machaka did not only succeed in metre in his other types of poetry like elegies, praises etcetera but he has succeeded in his love poems as well. In his love poem *Phuti*, it is pleasing to notice how well he has constructed his sentences in equal syllables from 13-18 as in the following stanza:

Ge|ke|le|bja|le|ke|ši|twa|go|re|to|lo|ga, (13)
 Kgo|mo|e|n|kga|ti|le, N|kwe|e|ši|twa|go|bo|le|la. (16)
 O|bo|ne|ka|ga|go|ma|hlo|phe|ta|ya|pe|lo|ya|ka|, (15)
 Ma|a|tla|a|le|ra|to|a|n|thwe|le|a|m|pe|a|go|we|na, (18)
 Ma|hlo|a|le|ra|to|a|n|tse|bi|ša|m+|ma|go|le|pa|pa|go:|
 (18)
 Ru|ri|Phu|ti|o|n|kgo|ma|re|tše|mo|mo|ye|ng!| (14)
 Yo|a|n|kga|ne|la|ng|le|phu|ti|ke|mo|la|i|wa|ka|, (17)
 O|n|thi|be|la|ke|e|nwa|me|e|tse|a|e|ra|to|; (15)
 O|n|tšhu|pa|se|di|be|ng|sa|me|e|tse|ma|ta|pa|. (15)
 Le|ra|to|la|Phu|ti|le|n|ta|te|di|tše|mo|la|la|. (15)
 (Machaka 1971:41)

(I am unable to turn,
 Beast has stepped on me, Tiger is unable to speak.
 You have seen with your own eyes, pearl of my heart,
 Forces of love carried me to you;
 Eyes of love introduced me to your mum and dad;

Surely Phuti, you have clung to my soul!
He who refuses me with Phuti is my murderer,
He prohibits me from drinking love water;
He points to me the well of brackish water.
Phuti's love has entangled my neck).

In this verse, where the poet unfolds personal sentiments and experiences, he has reached great heights. This he has done successfully owing to good use of metre. Even though Machaka has intended modernising his love poems by employing metre, he did not allow outward forms to control his poetry.

5.5.2 Repetition techniques

We do find various types of repetition techniques in Machaka's poems. **The Pocket Oxford Dictionary** (1983:762) defines the concept repetition as:

repeating or being repeated.

The repeat means to go over a thing again. This can occur at the beginning, in the middle as well as at the end of lines in a poem.

When commenting on repetition Mapanje and White say:

Repetition on the page quickly becomes tiresome. In performance, repetition can be enormously impressive both as a means of emphasis and because in fact there is no real repetition, the words may be the same but the emphasis changes

(Mapanje and White 1983:45)

From the preceding quotation the researcher safely says, the changing of repetition gives the following structural patterns:

5.5.3 Alliteration

Milubi (1988:104) defines alliteration as

... the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words.

(Milubi 1988:104)

Alliteration is the process by which same vowel or consonant sounds are repeated in one or more lines. Vowel sound repetition is termed assonance whereas consonant sound repetition is termed consonance. At times alliteration occurs in syllables of words, in phrases in a passage or stanza. These various types of alliterations may be illustrated clearly as follows:

- (a) *Ke lebeletše Bohlabela boka motsomi,
Ka buša ka retologela kua Bophirima,
Gape le kua Borwa ke ile ka okamela:*
(Machaka 1971:40)

(I looked to the East like a hunter
I again turned to the West
Even to the South I peeped).

There is some relationship in meaning of the words *lebeletše*, *retologela* and *okamela*. We can therefore say Machaka uses repetition in the form of synonyms. In the following examples, we find repetition of a word or a phrase as follows:

- (b) Repetition of a Verb - present tense:

*Ge ke le bjale ke šitwa go retologa,
Kgomo e nkgatile, ke šitwa go bolela.*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(As I am, I am unable to turn,
Beast has stepped on me, I am unable to speak).

- (c) Repetition of Verb - future tense:

*Ke tla ubulwa ke dibatana tša naga;
Ke tla phela bophelo bja marathana -
Ke tla gata mabu a se nago pelomogau.*
(Machaka 1971:41)

I will be snatched by wild beast
I will lead a reckless life
I will tread on merciless ground)

(d) Repetition of a noun

*Maatla a lerato a nthwele a mpea go wena;
Mahlo a lerato a ntsebiša mmago le papago;
(Machaka 1971:41)*

(Force of love drove me to you;
Eyes of love introduced me to your mum and dad)

(e) Repetition of a pronoun:

*Pelong ya ka go agile wena fela Phuti,
Mafahleng a ka go kiba wena mminalNare;
(Machaka 1971:41)*

(Phuti has settled in my heart,
In my chest throbs you who take buffalo-
venerator;)

(f) Repetition of antonyms:

*Ke lebeletše **Bohlabela** boka motsomi,
Ka buša ka retologela kua **Bophirima**,
Gape le kua **Borwa** ke ile ka okamela;
Lentsu le boletše la re ke ye **Leboa**,
(Machaka 1971:40)*

(I looked to the East like a hunter,
I again turned to the West,
Even to the South I peeped;
A voice said I must go to the North).

(g) Repetition of a verb root, for example, *-thuš-*, *rwal-* or *-gat-*:

i) *O a ntšhita, e tla o be mothuši wa ka:
Ge o palelwa wena badimo ba tla go thuša.
(Machaka 1971:41)*

(It is heavy come and be my helper
If it's difficult for you the gods will help
you).

ii) *Etila re thušane re rwale morwalorato,
(Machaka 1971:41)*

(Come let us help each other carry the love
load,

- iii) Gobane **kgato** ya bobedi nka se e gate,
(Machaka 1971:42))

(Because the second step I will not take,)

Machaka, from the given examples has succeeded in using this repetition technique in various ways.

- (h) He also repeats a word in one sentence.

- i) *Sebata se dumediša wena phoofolo!*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Beast greets you animal!)

- (i) Oblique-line repetition pattern with right to left
slant, will be illustrated in the following examples.

- i) *Lentsurato le mpiditše ka tshetshema,*
Ka hlanola direthe ka ya Senwa Barwana -
(Machaka 1971:40)

(Lovevoice called me and I ran,
I ran to Bochum -)

- ii) *Sebata se dumediša wena phoofolo!*
Nkwe e re kgomo mpulele sefero ke tsene,
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Beast greets you animal
Tiger says ox open the door that I enter).

- (j) Oblique-line repetition pattern with left to right
slant.

Unlike in his elegies where this technique is used
in a limited manner, here good use of it has been
made.

This is evidenced by the following examples:

- i) *Ke lebeletše Bohlabela boka motsomi,
Ka buša ka retologela kua Bophirima,
Gape le kua Borwa ke ile ka okamela;*
(Machaka 1971:40)

I looked to the East like a hunter,
I again turned to the West,
Even to the South I peeped:

- ii) *Etla re thušane re rwale morwalorato.
O a ntšhita; e tla o be mothuši wa ka;*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Come let us help each other to carry the
love load
It is heavy; come and be my helper;)

(k) Discontinuous repetition

This technique which Machaka has successfully used in his elegies, is also well displayed in his love poems. Examples below prove a point:

- i) *Babinakgomo mpheng naka ya phalola!
Nkabeleng Phuti, sethogolo sa bophelo,
Mpheng yena pheta ya thaga mo moyeng,*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Buffalo venerators, give me the shrill flute
used with drum!
Give me Phuti, the charm of life,
Give her to me, the pearl of my spirit)

- ii) *Mahlo a lerato a ntsebiša mmago le papago;
Ruri Phuti o nkgomaretše mo moyeng!
Yo a nkganelang le Phuti ke mmolai wa ka,
O nthibela ke enwa meetse a lerato;
O ntšhupa sedibeng sa meetsematapa.
Lerato la Phuti le ntateditše molala.*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Eyes of love introduced me to your mum
and dad
Surely Phuti has clung to my soul!
He who refuses me Phuti, is my murderer,
He stops me from drinking waters of love;
He points me to the well of brackish water.
Phuti's love has entangled my neck).

- iii) *Mpheng Phuti leloba la pelo ya ka ...*
La mpha yena ke tla le šia lethabong
Phuti ke naledi ya masa pelong ya ka,
(Machaka 1971:42)

(Give me Phuti the flower of my heart ...
Should you do that I will leave you in
peace.
Phuti is the morning star of my heart,)

5.5.4 Parallelism

Schapera defines parallelism as

A correspondence, in sense or construction of
successive clauses or passage, where in each pair of
lines, the first halves are identical in wording and the
second are basically alike by meaning.
(Schapera 1965:19)

The examples given below bear evidence of initial and partial parallelism.

- i) *Ke tla phela bophelo bja marathana -*
Ke tla gata mabu a se nago pelomogau.
(Machaka 1971:41)

(I will lead a reckless life -
I will tread on merciless ground).

- ii) *Nkabeleng Phuti, sethokgolo sa bophelo,*
Mpheng yena pheta ya thaga mo moyeng,
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Give me Phuti, the charm of life,
Give her to me, the pearl of my soul.)

To put emphasis on Schapera's definition about parallelism, Hodza and Fortune
comment about parallelism as follows:

It is a structural principle which builds poetic units of
successive lines. This principle can be complete or
partial.

(Hodza and Fortune 1979:88)

Complete parallelism refers to where the parallel lines have a common pattern while partial parallelism refers to where the structures are not identical.

Hodza and Fortune further state

Parallelism is observed when an idea is contrasted with another idea in position through the same part of speech.

(Hodza and Fortune 1979:88)

The preceding examples serve as good examples of partial parallelism. Machaka has successfully made good use of this technique in his love poems.

From what has been discussed under repetition, the researcher may safely say repetition of a word/s in the preceding and succeeding lines, comes automatically and unconsciously. It has also been observed that in spite of the many faults that the modern poet has, certain essential characteristics of traditional Northern Sotho compositions have been retained. Our modern poets are trapped in this. They follow the traditional style consciously or unconsciously. Perhaps this feature is to the Northern Sotho poet what rhyme is to poets of other foreign languages.

5.6 IMAGERY

Machaka is noted with appreciation for poems which have become great because of his rich imagery and metaphorical language usage. The researcher has already stated that he does not interfere with the structure of his language in order to accommodate foreign languages' techniques when writing his love poems. Machaka's mode of presenting his love poems has thus risen above the average standard of a mere description of unconvincing emotions.

His poetry is thus regarded with modesty, as a matter of the heart with the head merely providing the pattern of presentation.

The **Pocket Oxford Dictionary** (1983:429) defines the concept imagery as,

... figurative illustration use of images in literature;
images, statutory carving ...

Fogle defines imagery as

Analogy or comparison, having a special force and identity from the peculiar aesthetic and concentrative form of poetry. It is to be judged according to its creative power, the connotative richness of its content, and the harmonious unity and fusion of its element.

(Fogle 1962:22-23)

The preceding definition implies that imagery involves the use of figurative language in order to create images. As forms of imagery are numerous, we shall analyse aspects of imagery such as metaphor, personification, symbolism, simile, hyperbole, proverbs and idioms only.

Abrams defines imagery as

... that which is applied from the mental pictures as claimed and are experienced by the reader of the poem, to the totality of elements which make up a poem.

(Abrams 1971:8)

Imagery refers to the way pictures are created in the mind. A good poet like Machaka makes use of all those means whereby sensory experience is conveyed in language in order to create images that appeal to the reader's five senses. The use of imagery introduces feelings in the minds of the readers with the purpose to heighten their emotions. From what we observe, his imagery is simple but effective, the flow of the words is natural, for the structure is not foreign to the Northern Sotho language. With the use of imagery the poet has succeeded to leave imagination to our own inferences and judgement.

5.6.1 Metaphor

The **Concise Oxford Dictionary** (1964:763) defines the concept metaphor as

... application of name or descriptive term to an object to which it is not literally applicable, instance of this, combination of inconsistent.

While Hawkes (1972:1) defines it as

A word which comes from the Greek word 'metaphora' derived from 'meta' meaning over and 'pherein' to carry. It refers to a particular set of linguistic processes, whereby aspects of one object are carried over or transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as if it were the first.

(Hawkes 1972:9)

Hawkes further says

... the effect of metaphor properly used is that by combining the familiar with the unfamiliar, it adds charm and distinction to clarify. A metaphor creates a new reality from which the original appears to be unreal. Our experiences have unity and meaning as we relate one thing to another through metaphor. Poets therefore write in metaphors, relate one thing to another and in that manner all things to themselves, give meaning to the world around them.

From the explanations given by the definitions above, a metaphor therefore is a figure of speech in which a likeness is expressed but words like, such as, are omitted. The comparison is thus not made explicitly.

Machaka, when speaking about Phuti says:

Phuti ke yena magogamašego pelong ya ka.

(Machaka 1971:42)

(Phuti is the nightstretcher in my heart).

With this sentence, the young man explains to us that when he goes to bed at night, he enjoys the sleep because he spends the night in bed with Phuti. He dreams sweet dreams about Phuti. He only awakes at dawn. Perhaps it is even the dawn chorus that wakes him up. He does not spend sleepless nights wandering in the wilderness in search of Phuti. He is ever with her. This gives him a sound sleep.

He further avers:

Phuti ke naledi ya masa pelong ya ka,
(Machaka 1971:42)

(Phuti is the morning star in my heart,)

A star is a celestial body appearing as luminous point in the night sky. The aspects of Phuti are carried over to the star. He speaks of Phuti as the morning star. She is likened to a planet seen in the east before sunrise; when man starts with active life. In this statement the young man sees life and a brighter future in Phuti. He pleads that he be given Phuti to be his bride so that together they enter eternally into a bright future.

5.6.2 Simile

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964:1188) defines the concept 'simile' as

The introduction, especially in poetry or poetical style, ostensibly for explanatory or illustrative purposes but often in fact for ornament only, of an object or scene or action with which the one in hand is professedly compared usually connected by a comparative conjunction, such as ...

While Phythian defines a simile as

A comparison for the purpose of explanation, allusion or decoration which uses such words as **like** or **as**.
(Phythian 1991:223)

Having read and understood the preceding definitions, the researcher can safely say a simile is a figure of speech which gives likeness to things. In a simile items of different classes are compared. A simile is therefore largely a device of descriptive writing, because it helps us to imagine what the writer is describing. It is an aid to visualization.

Machaka compares his looking to the East to a hunter. Normally a hunter is very careful when he is in search of game. Like a hunter whose eyes are wide open, the poet says:

- 1) *Ke lebeletše Bohlabela boka motsomi,*
(Machaka 1971:40)

(I looked to the East like a hunter,)

The poet's use of this simile explicitly explains a situation effectively. He explains to us the careful manner which he used in searching for Phuti. This enhances the meaning of the poet's utterances.

- 2) *Pelo ge e rera ga e robale Bahwaduba,*
E bjalo ka motsomi a theile dinare,
(Machaka 1971:40)

(An occupied mind does not rest Bahwaduba,
It is like a hunter who has set a trap for buffaloes).

It is true that a mind with problems or a mind solving problems is never at peace. The poet compares such a mind with a hunter who has set a trap with the mind of catching his game. He spends a restless period until he shall have caught the game. All the time he thinks of this and that. But his main wish is to catch the game. So is the lad who proposes love to Phuti. His wish is that she accepts his proposal. He will not rest until he gets a positive answer from Phuti.

5.6.3 Symbolism

Symbolism is in effect, standardized metaphor. Literature frequently makes use of symbolism to convey meaning. Machaka also, in his love poems, uses symbolism in a very artistic manner. He conveys meaning through evocative symbols instead of employing the more traditional techniques of orderly narrative.

Explaining symbolism in a form of definition, **The Concise Oxford Dictionary** (1964:820) says:

... thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought.

Machaka symbolises Phuti as

*Mpheng Phuti leloba la pelo ya ka ...
Phuti ke naledi ya masa pelong ya ka,*
(Machaka 1971:42)

(Give me Phuti the flower of my heart ...
Phuti is the morning star of my heart,)

Phuti is the lad's flower of his heart. Traditionally a flower is a symbol of love and life because from a flower comes fruit of various types. To me, for Phuti to be a flower of the lad, symbolizes a generation which will emanate from their love, as ultimately the two shall get married and have children. It may also symbolise beauty, beauty which is irresistible to him.

Even though the poet did not make mention of the type of flower and its colour, it may be right to conclude that it is a red rose because it symbolises love, perfect love.

Phuti is the morning star of my heart ... A morning star symbolises the dawning of a new day. It also symbolises the beginning of new things and hope. Therefore, Phuti is new hope for the gentleman in question.

5.6.4 Hyperbole

The definition for the concept hyperbole as defined by **The Concise Oxford Dictionary** (1964:596) is

exaggerated statement not meant to be taken literally.

The definition is proved correct by the statement below:

Laka (lerato) go wena le šišinya Makgabeng.
(Machaka 1971:40)

(Mine (love) to you moves the Makgabeng)

Surely, if the statement was to be taken literally, one could not imagine a mountain moving because of a young man's love for a young woman. By the way, the moving of the mountain would involve vegetation on the mountain as well as the animals and reptiles living on it. Definitely, the movement which is presumed to be great, would frighten them. Some would even run away for dear life. This would cause a lot of havoc and confusion. All the gentleman in question means with this statement is that he loves Phuti more than words can tell. With this exaggeration the reader understands the intense love for Phuti.

Mafahleng a ka go kiba wena mminaNare
Mošito o kwala kua Makgabeng le Gananwa.
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Your beat sounds loudly in my chest
buffalovenerator
The sound is heard in Makgabeng and Blaauwberg)

Under normal circumstances, the beat in the chest is that of the heart and it is not heard. But today we come across a heavy sound beat of *mminaNare* in the poet's chest. The sound is so heavy, it is said to be heard at Blaauwberg. Blaauwberg is a mountain in the Bochum area, which is not very near to Bochum. But according to the lad's statement,

the people in Blaauwberg hear the beat of his heart. This exaggerated statement gives us the idea of the passionate love of the lad for Phuti.

The preceding hyperbolic statements must make us regard poetry with modesty, as a matter of the heart, with the head merely providing the pattern of presentation.

It is not natural and possible for a person to beat in another's chest. Neither is it possible for a mountain to be moved by the love of one person for another. These lines are mere exaggerations. The sensitivity of feeling in the statements makes the poem rather special.

5.6.5 Personification

Personification gives inanimate objects or animals human status. This is supported by the definition given in **The Pocket Oxford Dictionary in Current English** (1983:549):
Personification

... represent (thing or abstraction) as having personal nature. Symbolize (quality) by figure in human form; embody in one's own person or typical exemplify.

When the poet's says

(i) A (mabu) nteletše Phuti ...
(Machaka 1971:40)

(It (soil) has nursed Phuti for me ...)

A personal nature has been attributed to soil. This is a poetic language, which has its unique magnet that set it apart from everyday language. It goes deep and it is arresting, inspiring and refreshing.

Using personification the poet has succeeded in injecting life into different inanimate objects.

(ii) *Lentšurato le mpiditše ka tshetshema.*
(Machaka 1971:40)

(The word love called me and I hurried).

The word love in this context is given the power of a person who has the ability to call and get a response. In this statement, the inanimate gets a response after he has been called. The word love called the poet, and he in turn responded by hurrying to it.

(iii) *Mahlo a lerato a ntsebiša mmago le papago;*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Eyes of love introduced me to your mother and father;)

This is very fascinating! It is as if eyes have the power to talk and a mind that knows conventional rules of manners where they can introduce a visitor to family members.

What the poet has done here can suitably be explained by Prometheus Unbound, Shelley in Marié Heese and Robin Lawton who avers:

He gave man speech, and speech created thoughts
which is the measure of the universe.

(Heese and Lawton 1978:1)

The poet has succeeded in creating the personified thought that has just been treated. His success can rightfully be explained by Moloi in *Limi* (1969:46) when he says:

Poetry is something more than a mere description of scenes, objects or imagination. It is not an aesthetic arrangement of lines on a page. Poetry has found in deep and intense feelings, lofty and unstained ideas - a revelation of the inner self, an upliftment from the concrete world. The content and its presentation is more important than giving an impressive outward picture of verse.

(Moloi 1969:46)

5.6.6 Proverb

Defining the word 'proverb', *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (1964:984) says it is a short pithy saying in general usage, adage.

The truth above is emphasised by Guma who defines a proverb as

a pithy sentence with general bearing on life. It serves to express some homely truth or moral lesson in such an appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe a particular situation.

(Guma 1985:65)

In short, proverbs are well structured witty sayings. As Guma (1985:65) puts it, one of the characteristics of proverbs is that they are practical in significance, and suggest a course of action to be followed in a given situation. In some cases, they may be said to pass a judgement on a particular situation.

The poet says:

Gape namagapeletšwa nka se e lokele ganong,
(Machaka 1971:42)

(A forced meat I will not put into the mouth,)

Given in full this proverb reads: *Nama kgapeletšwa e phuma pitša* (A forced issue always miscarries). Taken from the context, this is a mouthful. The gentleman in question states it very clearly that he will not allow it to be forced to marry someone just to divorce her at a later stage.

Though he did not use many proverbs in this poem in particular, he has used it in an artistic and successful manner.

5.6.7 Idioms

Guma explains idioms as follows:

In their basic form, idioms are based on the infinitive form of a particular verb stem, which is the key-word in the whole construction. This verb stem may appear in its simple form or in one or other of its derivative forms.

(Guma 1985:68)

An idiomatic expression is an expression which shifts the meaning of the words from their literal form to the figurative form. They are well structured. Moloi in *Limi* says

One is inclined to feel that poetry can never sound artificial if the idiom of the language is natural in it and is not consciously molested to satisfy a rule or pattern.

(Moloi 1969:31)

A poet who forgets that our Northern Sotho idiom is bound with the structure of the language molests it in order to satisfy a rule or a pattern in his poems. Such a poet is unfair to the Northern Sotho language.

Fortunately, Machaka uses the natural language in his poems, hence the success he has attained in his poetry.

(i) *Nkwe e re kgomo mpulele sefeko ke tsene!*

(Machaka 1971:41)

(Tiger says, beast open the gate so that I can enter!)

When the lad in question says open the gate so that I enter, he simply means, accept my proposal. By so doing, the type of expression enriches the statement.

- (ii) *Mpatamele o mphumole masetla-pelo, Phuti,*
(Machaka 1971:41)

(Come nearer me and comfort me, Phuti,)

To comfort somebody means to make him forget his troubles or worries, and be relieved. So, when the lad requests Phuti to be his comforter, he means she must accept his proposal and make him happy, by loving him. If Phuti opens her heart for him, then he would be the happiest man ever. The gentleman in question says

- iii) *Lentšurato le mpeditše ka tshetshema,*
Ka hlanola direthe ka ya Senwa Barwana
(Machaka 1971:40)

(Loveword called me and I hurried,
I turned my heels and went to Bochum -)

When a speaker says, I turned my heels and went to Bochum; one can ask oneself as to how possible is it for a person to turn one's heels? What the speaker means in this idiomatic expression is that he ran to Bochum.

From the idioms that are cited as examples, one is justified when concluding that Machaka has succeeded in the use of idiomatic expressions in his love poems.

5.7 CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed in this chapter, it is clear that Machaka's love poems convey meaning by well structured words. Truly speaking, this is enhanced by the use of imagery which gives the readers a clear description and understanding. He has a good command of language, which he uses to unfold his personal sentiments and emotions.

Machaka's love poems are written naturally as he did not observe rhythmic patterns similar to those of foreign languages. As one reads Machaka's love poems, one gets some experience or feeling of sharing with him his inner feelings. The form and technique of his love poems are bound up with what they are intended for, namely, to please his readers.

In the love poem, Phuti, it is unfortunate that one cannot deduce from the title that the poem is a love poem until one has read it. This has been a technique that the poet applied purposely, in order to attract the reader so that he reads on, without stopping.

In his love poems Machaka complied with Mpanje and White (1983:32) who state:

Poetry is about pleasure, and the heart of all
performance is the exuberant demonstration of skills.
(Mpanje and White 1983:32)

CHAPTER 6

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

6.1 Looking back

In the previous chapters we followed Machaka at work. However, owing to the general nature of this study, the researcher could not make an in-depth study of Machaka's poetry. The researcher treated a wide variety of aspects connected with this poet's work as a way of laying foundation for future studies of Machaka's poetry.

The poetry of Machaka covers a variety of themes. In this study the focus is on four of his main themes, namely, praise, protest, elegy and love. The researcher is aware that some students may not agree with what is felt as well-considered interpretations of some poems. Obviously no two people see a point in the same manner. What is important however is the motivation of one's point of view. There is no gainsaying the fact that a poet is open to more than one interpretation. Untermeyer supports this statement thus:

... readers must have a tolerance for the ambiguous, the more so since the most profound poetry does not yield its complete significance at a cursory reading.

(Untermeyer 1968:73)

In the different sections of this study, emphasis is laid on the critical analysis of Machaka's poetry. The researcher has also discovered that literature is a reliable source and record of information. It reflects the culture of a people. In some of his poems, Machaka deals with major problems that men and women encounter in their daily living. This view is poignantly stated by Guma in the following words.

As actors on the stage, the stage of life on which life's drama is gradually unfolded in all its multifarious ways, the various actors may indirectly influence us by what they say and do, and thus pass invaluable information on to us.

(Guma 1985:171)

6.2 Praise poetry

The natural expression of people in joy and in sorrow is through their own music and praise poetry. Since music and praise poetry mirror a people's past and present life, it is desirable that it should be recorded and preserved for progeny.

Our study has revealed that Machaka's praise poetry encapsulates all that is fundamental to the Batlokwa tribe, and all that is sacred and life-giving. In his poetry Machaka uses a variety of poetic devices such as parallelism and linking to enhance its quality.

A closer look at his praise poetry further showed that Machaka portrayed real Batlokwa heroes whose delight was in the battlefield. The history of the Batlokwa, as reflected in Machaka's praise poetry reveal that they were a nation in arms whose main mission was to conquer and subjugate their enemies. Their life was organised in every detail to make them efficient warriors. In their preparations for wars, praises, songs and dances played an essential role. In its quality Machaka's praise poetry is at par with that of other African nations in our country. It manifests almost all essential characteristics of this kind of poetry. Cope's remarks are sufficient proof:

... Praise poems cannot be described as simply, however, nor as lacking in linguistic artificiality. Praise composition is consciously an art; ... The praise poems exhibit all the characteristics of poetry.

(Cope 1968:25)

It is not only in the praise poetry that Machaka revealed traditional life, but in almost all his poetry. The use of proverbs and idioms in his poems remind us that he is dealing with traditional concepts as well as traditional values.

Machaka did not run into problems because he did not copy devices that are foreign to the genius of his language. Striking in his poems as a whole is the use of metaphors, which is sustained throughout. Predominant also is the use of right to left slant repetition pattern. The use of these patterns combined with imagery, produce typical

prototype poems. The use of figures of speech reveals to what extent he has succeeded in representing the concrete world and situations around him. In his praise poems we find names of Batlokwa kings and heroes whose manly deeds are perpetually enshrined in them. These heroes will be remembered, as history keeps the memory of the past alive, preserves it in the present. It will be a valuable source of information for those who would like to study the social history of the Batlokwa.

In these poems the Batlokwa will learn about heroes who left their footprints on the sands of time and achievements will remain a source of inspiration to the nation at large.

6.3 Elegy

A dominating feature in his elegies is the well blending of ancestral worship with Christian faith.

In his elegies Machaka instils in us the idea of death as an end to life which the Batlokwa do not accept. To them there is life after death. This is proved many-a-time in his elegies. A vivid example is where the poet speaks to his deceased father, when he asked him to give him permission to marry exogamously. This idea of life after death, which is as old as the hills, did not come with the missionaries. They found this among the Blacks. Lekgothoane in his poem *Tsebo ya Modimo* (The knowledge of God) emphasises this fact thus:

*Ge mohetene e le motho yo a rego
Modimo ga a gona, tsebang gobane rena ga se rena bahetene
Re tsebile Modimo mo faseng la Sentsho,
Pele Ramošweu a bea leoto faseng la Sentsho.*

(If a heathen is one who says
There is no God, know that we are not heathens.
We knew God here in Africa
Before the White man put his foot on this continent).

In this poem S.K. Lekgothoane tells the missionaries and who ever thinks that way, that they must not boast about having taught Blacks who God is. Blacks knew about God long before they came into contact with the Whites. To the traditional Black, death is brought about by *badimo* (gods) to their erring descendants.

This is evidenced as the

"One and all pervasive Divinity at work and is personalized as Kgobe or Hobeane".

(ELCSA, Circular 28/79, p. 12)

When praising him S.K. Lekgothoane says:

*Hobeane a Hodi a Hotlo;
Motho wa go bopa dithaba le maswika;
Monoši wa mmopabotse a magomogomo
Mokakeo, Mokakeno
Lebone la ditšhabatšhaba ...*

(Mashabela 1982:219)

(Hobeane of Hodi of Hotlo
Creator of mountains and rocks
The only one of the Greater of Universal beauty,
He who is that side and this side ...
The light of all the races ...)

In his elegies Machaka uses euphemism effectively. It does not only illustrate the awe in which death was held, but is also symbolic of death as a journey to the land of the ancestral spirits.

Through the use of euphemism, parents in the past succeeded in protecting their children against fear by telling them half-truths about death. This approach prevented the children from mourning. The child was told, for instance, that God has taken granddad to heaven or he is asleep or he has gone away. This implied a state that is reversible. The dead will return to life.

We have also seen how effectively he uses repetition of words or word groups to drive his points home. The use of idioms and figures of speech in his elegies is a characteristic feature of Machaka's mode of expression, which lend uniqueness to his elegies. This may safely be labelled Machakaism which is in keeping with Scott-James's description.

In general, the employment of a poet is like that of a curious gunsmith or watchmaker; the iron and silver are not his own, but they are the least part of that which gives value: the price lies wholly in the workmanship.

(Scott James 1948:143)

Machaka's workmanship is praise-worthy. It has left an indelible mark on Northern Sotho literature.

6.4 Protest

Dhlomu says:

Yet how often one hears people say the African is happy and care-free and insensitive because he smiles - ignorant of the fact that behind those smiles and calm expression, lie a rebellious soul, a restless mind, a bleeding heart, grim determination, a clear grasp of facts and a situation, the highest aspirations, stupendous ambitions, the will to live.

(Dhlomu 1939:44)

It is only when one reads the African protest literature, that one realises it. In his protest poem, Machaka is harsh. He has made use of clear language. This he does in order to be understood by everybody. He forces everybody to realise the truth and by so doing arouses in every person the feeling of protest. He has succeeded in exposing hidden evils of mankind. These malpractices are exposed by the poet in very strong words. Machaka believes that poetry should deal with burning issues that need to be addressed.

The oppression of the black man by the white man does not escape Machaka's whiplash. He objects vehemently the unfair treatment of the black man by a white man. This is evidenced in the examples cited under protest.

Machaka has succeeded in using his protest poems, as a platform from which to inveigh improprieties he sees in mankind. His objection to unfairness speaks loud in his protest poetry.

What seems to perturb the reader is the poet's conclusion to his protest poems. There is no spirit of reconciliation. In **Khudugo**, Machaka ends this poem with piercing words thus:

*Wena moemaemiša batho tseba se!
Ge e le ditumedišo tša ka di fedile,
Go wena ke go fa letsogo la lehloyo, ...*

(Machaka 1979:21)

(You who moves people from pillar to post, know this!
My greetings are finished,
I give you a hand of hatred, ...)

But we are happy that practically things have changed drastically. We see a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness, though the victims do not forget. There is therefore, not only hope but also imperative necessity that both Black and White forgive each other and return to living together harmoniously more than ever before. Perhaps there is even hope that both Blacks and Whites have learned a bitter and dearly bought lesson, and will not be trapped into it again. Dearly bought because millions of people lost their lives.

For the sake of emphasis we would like to repeat what we said earlier on about Machaka's use of figures of speech.

He uses a regulated stream of idiomatic expressions to make his protest poetry more vivid in description and more penetrating in thought. A few examples will prove this:

*Rakgolo o rile a mpotša ka ngwaya sekgoši,
Mahlo a tšeela pula mošomo mahlodi a rotha,
O mpoitše dikgeila pelo ka kakatlela seledu,*

.....
Ke be ke tla re lefase palega o nkhumetše.

(Machaka 1979:54)

(When granddad told me this I was embarrassed,
My eyes flowed with tears like pouring rain,
He told me heart-breaking news and I was surprised,
.....
I would say earth open up and cover me).

Many more idiomatic expressions are used in his protest poetry. These add to his poetry the gaudiness of the rich language knowledge that he has. His usage of figures of speech, which are drawn from traditional life, make his concepts more lucid, especially to those who are used to this culture.

In most of his poems, Machaka writes on contemporary events and issues. As in *Khudugo*, he does not leave the culprit unpunished.

6.5 Love

Machaka's love poems are written in good language. Though his love poems vary, he dwells mainly on the love of the maiden that he ultimately led to the altar. Machaka is a great lover. He presents his love poems effectively by using common devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, to name but few. The use of these descriptive devices is not just to evoke the image of beauty to his loved ones. It is seen as a complex phenomenon that is conveyed by a variety of metaphors. In this way his poems have become a living picture, a symbolic mirror in which every one should be able to weigh himself.

His love poetry is an invaluable contribution to the Northern Sotho literature. Through his love poems Machaka succeeds in freely giving expression to his inner feelings and imagination. It is free in the sense that he expresses his emotions of love to his beloved mistresses. His use of poetic language has a unique magnet that sets it apart from everyday discourse.

The moral that is found in Machaka's love poems is great. In his love poems, we have learned that to stick to one's own culture notwithstanding its shortcomings is the best. We have seen how Machaka struggled, spending sleepless nights, trying to persuade his relatives to accept his move of marrying exogamously. He even came to the point where he developed enmity among his relatives, who did not accept his marriage. He proudly tells those who do not accept his chosen maiden to keep away from him. It is a pity that this marriage to the maiden that he married against his relatives did not end well.

Machaka's work has made a major contribution to Northern Sotho literature and the historical culture of Batlokwa.

Death has robbed us of this hero. We laid him to eternal rest. Memories are too fresh for anyone to believe that he has really gone forever. It is our hope that future researchers or those who are interested in the poetry of Machaka, will find this study a solid foundation on which to build their projects.

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